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14
J. W.

from

H. W.

14. Nov/91

BRENNUS;

OR

THE DOWNFALL OF TYRANNY:

A Tragedy, in Five Acts.

ALCANDER;

OR

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP:

A Drama, in Five Acts.

BY WILLIAM MACLEAN.

GLASGOW:

THOMAS MURRAY & SONS.

1871.

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BRENNUS;

OR

THE DOWNFALL OF TYRANNY:

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

MEN.

BRENNUS, *the King.*
TIMON, *Son of the King.*
CONLUS, *Son of the late King, and Lover of Linda.*
EVANDER, *a Duke, and Lover of Arella.*
RUFUS, }
CELSUS, } *three Lords.*
MENTOR, }
RENZAS, *a Magician.*
ALENSUS, } *two Courtiers.*
PETRO, }
A MURDERER.
CITIZENS.
TWO ATTENDANTS.
SPIRITS.
Other Attendants, Guards, Soldiers, &c.

WOMEN.

ARELLA, *Daughter of the late King.*
LINDA, *Daughter of the King.*

SCENE.—The Palace of the King, the Market-place, and a Wood, not many miles distant.

BRENNUS.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

The Market-place.

Enter LORDS RUFUS AND CELSUS, AND SEVERAL CITIZENS.

Rufus. Mix well among them.

Celsus. 'Tis the only way
To know their trim.

Rufus. I think them ripe for it.

[He then addresses the Citizens.]

Wherefore so sad?

1st Citizen. How can one be but sad?

Rufus. What aileth thee?

1st Citizen. What aileth every one?

Rufus. Nay, friend, but tell me what thou dost complain of?

1st Citizen. The heart-ache, or a sort of melancholy—
Offspring of disappointment and distress.

Why sir, to tell the truth, the times—the times!

Rufus. The times, indeed, are troublous and severe;
Oppression stalks abroad in all her forms—
Terrific and destroying. From the peasant,
Whom sharp adversity has doomed to toil
'Neath summer's sun and winter's pelting snows,
Up to the man whom other days have seen
Reclining in the arms of luxury,—

The times are changed. Oh, I have known the day
When the term poverty would startle me,
So rarely did the word confront my ear;
But the lean haggard forms and altered looks
Of far the greater portion of our sons
Custom has made familiar and unheeded.
We need a cure—a balsam must be had,
To heal the bleeding gashes of the land.

2d Citizen. What would you have us do?

Celsus. Be men, be men!

And the proud arm of tyranny will wither.

Citizens. We are, we will!

Rufus. But there be many ways of being men.

A true and faithful band, a chosen band,
Of resolute and never-yielding souls,
Have hurled a cruel monarch from his throne,
And made his kingdom totter to its fall.
Determination is the stuff we want;
Be firm and resolute, and all is yours.
Is man, the essence of a thing divine,
Thus to be mocked—to see his choicest boons
Wrenched from his grasp, himself condemned to drink
The fatal potion mingled by the foe
Without the seeming of a single effort
To dash the poisoned chalice from his lips?

1st Citizen. But how can simple men, whate'er their zeal
To do their country good, oppose a power
So potent as the king's? nothing avails
But to submit.

Rufus. To-morrow brings an hour

Of death or life. I pray you to be there;
Come with the throng; something will be disclosed,
If not to ease us of our grievous yoke,
At least to show us how it may be borne.

Rufus. No nation can be long enslaved that thirsts
To taste the rich ripe fruit of liberty.
The strong desire will work the wished-for end.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter TIMON, PETRO, AND ALENSUS.

Timon. How wags the world with you, Petro?

Petro. At the same pace as he was ever wont to do—fast and slow, hot and cold, as may be and the occasion serves.

Alensus. Petro the philosopher! good, my masters! Petro at length has bought himself a tongue, after much advice and commendation so to do. Had'st thou asked me that question, I should have answered that the world wags well; and being a wag at all, must of necessity be a great one. But this is all foreign to the matter in hand. 'Tis whispered, Timon, that you are on the eve of being married. Is this the case?

Timon. Why, this is to the quick at once, and quickly. They say a quick duty requires a quick step, so a quick question requires a quick answer. It is therefore better to answer it whilst quick.

Alensus. There you spoke like a man and a Prince.

Petro. And King to be.

Timon. What is there horrid in a married man?
Cannot he still live merrily, and be
As social as the stanchest bachelor

That turns his nose up when the name of wife
Assaults his ear? Is he not free to join
The jovial bacchanalian roar of mirth—
To be a fellow still of honest fellows,
Retorting quip for quip, and song for song?

Alensus. A married man must shun those buxom souls
With whom the tardy foot of laggard Time
Was spurred into a brisk and lively pace—
With whom the drear and irksome hour of night
Was wont to put the cheek of laughter on,
And mirth and madness hold wild revelry.
Thy heart and conduct must be then as pure
As the chaste inmates of a nunnery,
Whose passions are the coldness of the north.
Have nuptial pleasures no satiety?
Has novelty lost all her charms for thee?
Hast thou no more of love's bewitching smiles
Than can be lavished on a single woman?

Timon. Woman was made for man—an helpmate skilled
To minister to his necessities.

Alensus. To be his fit companion rather say,
The loving sharer of his bed and board.

Timon. There's such a thing lives in this moonish world
As I have heard philosophers describe—
The essence of romantic poetry.
Man is a medley, wonderfully formed
And linked together—full of fierce extremes—
Composed of many imperfections, yet
Compounded so that, to the naked eye,
These imperfections are not visible.

His fellow-mortal may esteem him fair;
Invidious slander may attack in vain
The virtuous seemings of his character;
Yet does he perpetrate such scoundrel deeds,
And in the froth and lewdness of desire,
Lashed to the car of his unbridled lusts,
Heedless alike of counsel or rebuke,
Still runs the wild course of illicit love!
You know me, comrades! I am such a one—
A creature of this very flesh and blood.
Apparently I may adopt a mode
Of life, and put the garb of virtue on;
Apparently is all; unchangeable,
I still remain the free, unfettered man.

Alensus. A plague on wedded expectation
Of freedom and so forth! 'tis the vile cant
Of hypocritical deluded men
Who have already kissed the rod of iron.

Petro. A man in love must not protest too much;
Liberal profession oft belies itself,
So let discretion temper all thy vows.

Alensus. Love, when intense, to madness is akin,
The mind has lost its balance, and instead
Of God-like reason, passion reigns supreme,
And kicks the beam in wanton selfishness.

Petro. Let us take heed and such a state eschew;
Best to keep woman in her proper place,
Handmaid of man and dear associate.

Alensus. Yes, keep her so, when thou has made her such.
Man plumes himself that he is woman's lord,

And brags and frets as such; but finds anon,
When passion has him in her powerful grip,
That she is lord and master—he her slave;
Her will is law, he dares not disobey,
But, abject vassal, trembles at her feet,
And fain to coax and cringe, becomes her drudge.
When the fierce winds of passion blow on man
He oft is dashed a wreck upon life's shore.

Petro. That were indeed a miserable state!

Alensus. But hear still further what this love can do.
There is a language in the eyes of love
Well understood by all his votaries;
The roguish glances of a woman's eye
Ne'er fail to steal away the heart of man.
Great is her power, and that she knows right well;
She may advance, retire, or idly pause,
Do what she likes, she is man's conqueror:
And yet this power of hers may work for good.
When woman rules, but never seems to rule,
'Tis oft for man the best and happiest state;
She curbs his wayward and impetuous will,
And, by her winning ways and loving words,
Leads him aright when he would fall astray.

Petro. So much as that he said in her behalf—
Take her for all in all, we like her well.

Timon. This is my case. I am a bachelor,
And have a passion for a certain maid—
'Twere needless to disguise the nature of it.
You understand me? I require your aid
To speak her fair and move her to my mood.

Alensus. I understand you; but of course 'tis meet
You practise well the art of flattery.
Call her angelic; summon up her pride;
Swear you will die ten hundred thousand deaths,
With tears that flow an ocean from each eye,
Rather than live an alien to her smiles—
Such is the way to win a woman's heart;—
Make the attempt in passion's warmest vein;
Conjure up all the magic notes of love
Which youth and beauty cherish and adore.

Timon. Thou art a master in this wilful school,
And givest good counsel. Hear thy scholar speak.
Then must I glow with the fierce fire of love,
And talk hyperbole! then must I dip
Up to the very lips, in passion's foam!
Imagination will be on the rack,
To swell her rare and new-coined qualities;
Language will cull its choicest subtlest terms;
The voice will chant these on its sweetest shell,
And give them forth with burning energy.

Alensus. The angel's outward seeming must be worn
To deck the crooked soul's deformities.
But this demands a skilful execution;
Deceit discovered, like a poisonous sore,
Spreads deadly gangrene over all the man—
His truth and character are damned for ever.

Timon. True, it is hard to play the hypocrite—
To speak and argue against reason's voice;
And yet how easily the form deceives
The shrewdest glance of sage experience,

Alensus. Take care that when thou wooest in that vein
Thou'rt not ensnared in meshes of true love.
'Tis hard to act the slave and yet keep free;
The moth that still will dally with the flame
Oft gets his wings singed, or is scorched to death.
Which is the greater knave—the man who woos
And wins a woman's love, and still forbears
To wed, in that he loves his freedom more,
And will not be entangled with a wife;
Or he who weds a woman for her wealth,
And never dreams of loving her at all?

Petro. Long courtships are, I swear, a dreadful bore;
Why should a man still hanker after woman,
And coax and wheedle and make signs of love,
Frittering away the best part of his life
In vain endeavour to allure her heart?

Alensus. Fashion decides that woman claims her dues
Of love and wooing—therefore she fights shy;
For months or years she will a siege endure,
And shelter take in any vantage ground,
And her fond heart is prancing high the while,
Needing her utmost strength and skill to curb;
Then drop the contest and her foe embrace.

Timon. Long fixtures seem to me more dreadful still.
Court in the morning and at evening wed,
Be still my motto. Life is short—seize we
The momentary raptures as they fly,
And let to-morrow fresh supplies produce
The ever-hungering soul of man to feed.

Alensus. Why should not youth be full of mirth and glee,

And folly too? 'tis just the time for it;
Youth is not bound to mope or moralise
Upon the vanity of earth's delights;
Ascetic age can manage all that work
When the fierce fire of passion is burned out;
Therefore, we say, improve the passing hour,
This maid of thine must both be wooed and won!

Petro. Go to; we are prepared to lend our aid.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter BRENNUS AND EVANDER.

Brennus. But tell me what the people say to it?
How beats their pulse? are they dissatisfied
With things as they exist, and cry aloud,
Redress! or do they still incline to bear
The gentle yoke that I have put on them?

Evander. Some are dissatisfied, and grudge to pay
The heavy imposts which the law demands.

Brennus. But these are few in number, and, I hold,
Needy adventurers—men of restless spirit—
Inflamed zealots—rogues of shipwrecked fame,
That in the purest times are ill at ease,
And quarrel ever with existing things
To aggrandise themselves.

Evander. 'Tis even so;
The thinking part of the community
Is much averse to change, and rather bears
A present ill, however sore, than fan

The flames of civil discord in the land.

Brennus. These can be reckoned on; and all the minions
Whom our high will hath planted in their place,
Self-interest enlists upon our side.

Evander. Yet must we be prepared; each soldier has
Received the bounty which his Monarch ordered.

Brennus. So long as they stand true we are secure;
But see well to it; largesses can buy
Strength and security to any throne.
Be liberal—the treasury is stored.
Tell them that I myself intend to ride
Among the ranks, and see my gallant troops
Resplendent in a glory all their own.
At such a sight rebellion hides its head.

Evander. This duty be it mine to see fulfilled.

[Exit EVANDER.]

Brennus. These seventeen years I've soared on lofty wing
To the very topmost pinnacle of power—
Imperial lord and master of the world—
And spread my gilded pennons to the wind.
These seventeen years my unrelenting sword
Has weeded out ambition from the soil—
Has dipped itself in blood of nearest kin,
And worked me out a noble path to fame.
Oft, on the iron front of the cold earth,
I used to sip the balm of sleep; next morn
Would find me fresh and youthful as itself;
And even yet I could renew these days
Of hazard and adventurous emprise,
Fierce and unbroken; let but the occasion

Challenge and I will answer to the call.
And now, forsooth, with brawl and petty squabble,
A mob must think to shake my steadfast throne
And crave the hand of force to put it down!
The matter could not chance on better times,
Or when my minions were in better mood.
Oft have I known Evander—in the hour
When slumber laid a stillness on the camp,
And the quick questioning of the sentinel's voice
Spoke counter to the howling of the blast—
Arise, ere yet the dewy breath of sleep
Had freshed his toil-worn frame, and forthwith steal
To spy the disposition of the foe.
Then would he carve the morrow's likelihoods—
Where to advance—where lay the weakest points—
Where most the foe drew up her proudest sons.
When dark had fled, forth rushed he with his band,
And swept like hurricane the hostile ranks.
This man is worth a thousand on my side.
But for a while I must subdue and hide
The soul's asperity. Arella's hand
Has long been looked to as the one thing left
To make my sovereignty complete. A child—
My brother's daughter—she alone was spared
To live—a woman from the general wreck,
That when she came of age she might become
A royal consort to myself or son—
Methinks the father has the prior claim.
I have a sort of liking to the girl,
And feel, moreover, both disposed and apt

To offer all the incense of true love.
The sacred cloak of meekness must be worn,
With the fond loving of the woodland dove
That sits a cowering by his mate at even.
Here comes the lady, and in proper mood.

Enter ARELLA.

There is a magic in that form of thine
That bids this bosom flutter. I have seen
The sun in summer rising in the east,
And putting all his robes of splendour on,
In the calm glory of the morning light;
And I have seen him setting in the west,
While the sweet songsters of the grove did sing
A parting anthem to the dying day—
When shades of evening with luxuriant smiles,
Were wooing him to leave his heavenly sphere
And bathe his torrid limbs in fragrant dew;
And he was beautiful to look upon.
Thou art my rising and my setting sun;
But shin'st in beauty more enchanting far
Than ever graced the brilliant orb of day.

Arella. What means my lord the King? Why, good my lord,
This adulation pains me to the core.

Brennus. I am in earnest, doom me not to death;
Not to be thine is death indeed to me.
I ask thy love—be my beloved wife,
Queen of my heart, and partner of the throne.

Arella. Thou art my father's brother and my King!
Trust me, I covet not to share the throne.

Brennus. With all the honours that surround the crown,

This life is heartless without thee!—thy love
Is needful to impart one ray of bliss.

Arella. Tears are my only answer; thus to wound
The bosom of a long and faithful friend!
Oh, do not urge me further in this suit.

Brennus. Fools, maniacs, madmen, all are dupes of love.
Philosophers and peasants are alike
The victims of this demon. Shall I live,
Or shall I not? thy answer seals my doom.
Thy breast is purer than the desert rose
That kisses nightly the bland dews of heaven,
And blushes forth its incense to the sun.

Arella. Then must I dare to utter what my heart
Presumed to cherish?

Brennus. Thou art then in love?

Arella. Forgive me if I be.—I can no more——

[*ARELLA falls down in a swoon; LINDA enters.*

Linda. Oh, wherefore this?

Brennus. Dear Linda, lend thine aid,

Arella faints! She will be well anon.

[*ARELLA is helped off the stage by LINDA.*

Ye spirits that abide in Hades' gloom,
Have ye no charm in this perplexity?
Rival in love! competitor in power!
My passion baulked! my scheme discomfited!
Myself become the scoff of envious tongues!
The gentle maid has not a heart to woo.
Brennus is made of stuff more obdurate
Than to be easily broken or subdued;
He'll not be kill'd so soon as love pretends.

He has, besides, some other schemes in store.
Yet may I read her such a tale of love
Will make her weep, indeed, and that ere long.
I'll to the woods—consult the magic spell
That there abides—hear what the gods declare,
And shape my course accordingly. The broil
And this new love-suit must be all unravelled
Before these ears have heard the midnight watch.

[Exit BRENNUS.]

SCENE IV.

A Cave in the Woods.

Enter CONLUS AND RENZAS.

Conlus. Since I am nobly born, as thou hast oft
In whispers hinted, why do I live here—
The merest shadow of nonentity—
And enter not upon the busy stage
Of life's adventure, where the manly soul
Has scope to show its valour, strength, and skill
In the wide warfare of encountering hosts?

Renzas. A something which I early may disclose
Hindered thy going. Hush! there is a noise. [Exit CONLUS.]
The lordly eagle thus, with wings unfurled,
Cleaving the lambent air with rapid sweep,
Disdains earth's low and middle mists, and soars
Aloft, with powerful flight, amid the clouds.
Ah! little does this young aspirant know,
While thus he longs to join the ranks of war,
His royal origin. He is not my son,

And yet he is. I saved him from the tomb
When the foul hand of Brennaus, crimson-red
With brother's blood, would have destroyed the heir.
I was to do the work; these eyes gushed tears;
I wept aloud, and, gazing on the boy,
Instead of perpetrating the dire deed,
I vowed that he should live to be revenged.
The boy, unconscious, smiled and kissed my hand,
As if good Heaven had whispered gratitude.

Re-enter CONLUS.

Conlus. It is an old and trusty visitor—
That rough harsh-seeming man.

Renzas. Then to thy studies.

Exit CONLUS. Enter BRENNUS disguised.

Welcome, good my Lord.

Brennus. All hail, magician! This, thy rugged cell,
Where silence grim as death does still usurp
A drear dominion from the rise till set,
Is heaven to thee—to gaze on future scenes
Thy lasting pleasure. Thou art ever here,
Wrapped in the mantle bright of prophecy.
Hours, months, and years, with all the tawdry deeds
Which little man can force upon the scene,
Pass and re-pass before thee clear as day.
The King is deep in love; Arella's form
Is the long cherished idol of his soul,
Whose flame is pure and spotless as the snow
That's newly drifted on the mountain's side.
If thy celestial skill can reach so far,
Tell me the issue of this tender suit.

Renzas. The power to dive into the morrow's scenes
Comes not at will—'tis hard to pierce the veil
That gloomily hangs o'er dark futurity,
And tell the secrets of the world unborn—
But give me space. Ye spirits of the deep!
Ye spirits, flitting on the dusky clouds,
You I invoke! descend, and lend your aid
To read the mysteries that dim my sight.
They come, they come! they spread their mystic wings!
They come, divine, along the mountain steep,
Treading fantastic through the dewy air.
Say now, attendants of the fatal three,
Shall Brennus and Arella wedded be?

[*The Spirits are heard from behind the scene.*

Spirits. On the snow-bright clouds descending,
Merrily we flit along,
To thy magic wand attending;
Listen to our fatal song:
When the mists decline to hover
On the rugged mountain's brow,
Then we may this truth discover!
Tell the crafty Brennus so.

Brennus. They will not tell thee—is not that their theme?
Perhaps they cannot, and they forge their lines
After the fashion of the Delphian strains—
Complex in meaning, so that, chance what may,
Interpret right, and they are never wrong.
Ask them again.

Renzas. They will not answer thee.

Brennus. Are they so saucy with their prophecies—
So rare in speech? I deemed that they were women,

And would have talked a winter's night away.
I'd like to learn the chances of this broil.

Renzas. Tell, heavenly dames! the issues of this war,
For well you know and can unfold the truth.

Spirits. To the fight the brave are hasting;
Valour gleams on every spear;
Fiery Mars the ranks is wasting—
Death and havoc struggle here.
On the heath the foe is lying,
Pale and bloody is his brow;
On the heath the foe is dying!
Tell the victor, Brennus, so.

Brennus. The field is ours then.

Renzas. Thanks, ye goddesses!

Brennus. 'Tis well; 'tis very well; again 'tis well;
But I have little faith in these same maids:
They would not answer me my first request.

Renzas. Silence does not insinuate defect.

Brennus. No, not at all; they would not answer me.

Renzas. Prophet and poet, too, are both inspired;
And though their manner, speech, and dress seem strange,
Let none eschew the message they proclaim.
Wreathing their fancies with ethereal gems,
They draw their teachings from the schools of heaven,
And love to tell things beautiful and true
In strains that pierce and thrill the hearer's heart.

Brennus. 'Tis not in man to shape his destiny;
And yet, by will and reason guiding him,
He may so far control and fashion it,
His life's work may be said to be his own.
I go to crush this tumult in the bud.

The means employed most surely shape the end;
And so, ere long, the rebels shall be taught.
Wilt thou to the wood's edge bear company?

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.—SCENE I.

*A Room at LORD MENTOR'S.**Enter RUFUS, CELSUS, MENTOR, AND SEVERAL LORDS AND
CITIZENS.*

Rufus. [*Reading a letter.*] “Discontent is the worst feature
of the present times, and ought not to be indulged in, much less
encouraged, by noble lords. Besides, the project is hazardous and
mad in the extreme, and will, to my certain judgment, come short
of success. What then?”——

What then? The traitor slave! Light as the air,

[*Tears the letter and throws it away.*]

Fit effigy of him whose work thou art,
I fling thee to the winds.

Celsus. Tell him the brave
But value life in that it serves their country
When freedom asks it.

Mentor. Yet it pains me sore
To think Evander takes no part with us.
His gracious presence would have tended much
To swell our ranks and aid our virtuous cause.

Rufus. Blister thy tongue, or rivet it with chains—
Unruly else! My lords and countrymen,
Thus are we here assembled, to discuss
Matters of dreadful import and replete
With deeds of future glory and alarm:

Speak, then, who lists, or who has aught to speak;

Let him say on—we hearken patiently.

1st Citizen. Freemen we were, and shall again be free!

2d Citizen. Ay, if the times would let us.

1st Citizen. Who is he

Obscures the radiant beams of liberty,

And hangs adversity on every brow?

2d Citizen. And wrings from honest hands their hard-earned
pittance?

Rufus. The tyrant King. Give me your hearts, ye brave!

And liberty is yet within your reach.

Methinks I see the smiling goddess now

Descend, with all her bright and lovely train,

To cheer my long-benighted fatherland,

And in her hand the riches of the world.

Mentor. 'Tis not mere love of change that fires our blood:

As the fierce tempest shakes the forest pines,

So do thy words heroic stir the crowd.

Rufus. Long have I marked the despot's withering step

Since he usurped the crown; its silent tread

Was like the pestilence that creeps along

A mighty continent, and blights its bloom—

Divesting it of life and loveliness.

Mentor. The many flagrant crimes that stain the throne

Are the sharp goads that prick us to revenge.

Celsus. The harsh and savage yell of tyrant's voice

Sends more of havoc among sons of men

Than winter's storms that sweep across the earth,

And spread destruction over hill and dale.

Rufus. Where are the ancient nobles of the land?

They were, and are not—weeded one by one,
A singular and fell contagion seemed
To hover o'er the dwellings of our sires,
And seize the worthiest. From the cedar's stem
The goodliest branch was surest to be lopped,
And now the shrivelled trunk alone is left.

Mentor. The crazy rotten vessel of the state
Is doomed to break in pieces 'mid the storm—
The despot master with his crew all drowned!

Rufus. Where is the man whom biting poverty
Has not assailed with hungry maw and wanned
His visage? Honest industry itself
Is doomed to suffer loss, reproach, and scorn,
And see the blessings which it held in store
Lapping the minions of a tyrant's court.


Citizens. To arms! to arms!

Celsus. Our watchword—Liberty!

Rufus. There have been many wars upon the earth—
Some waged for fame, or sport, or power, or lust;
A few for love of truth and liberty,
Righteous in cause and glorious in success;
But never one was holier than this.

Mentor. So let the issue be as it deserves;
The banner waves, beneath whose friendly shade
The soldier and the citizen unite
In noble daring for a noble end;
And never shall the floating pennant droop
Until the tyrant falls,—

Rufus. And we are free.
The north and south shall catch the spirit-voice



On every gale, and rally to this point—
Its source and centre, whence shall emanate
The glowing flame, that, ever-spreading wide,
Still gathers strength with every evolution,
Till, dreadful in its own engenderings,
The huge volcano overwhelms the world! [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

The Woods.—CONLUS is seen shooting with bow and arrows.
He disappears in the direction of his shot.—Shortly after,
Enter LINDA AND ARELLA.

Linda. Arella, thou hast never been in love,
Or thou would'st say the world itself were nought
Did it debar us from a sight like this—
There goes the perfect manliness of man!

Arella. My heart deceives me then.

Linda. It is a spell,
Omnipotent to charm, that woos the soul
And makes or mars its native happiness.
Arella. All this and more. Who has not felt its power?
My heart is sick,—hereafter will I tell
What vexes me; meanwhile be not concerned—
Speak of thy love.

Linda. Stranger and poor belike!
A hideous crime, the rank's disparity!
What stirs there in these royal veins of ours
To render us more noble than the rest—
Our common brotherhood? Lives virtue here,
With all its honoured and ennobling gems,

And here alone? or does the lowly peasant,
Maugre his sun-tinged cheek and coat of fleece,
Inherit eke the seeds of honesty
And lofty purpose? True, he is a man—
The son of luxury is nothing more.
Unrobe the latter of his gorgeous dress,
And turn him on the world; and tell me now,
What maketh him to differ from the clown?

Arella. And yet affection is more apt to flow
Where rank finds rank;—things of a kindred nature
Still cling together.

Linda. Well, it may be so—
It is a wayward fancy of my own,
And shall have vent—my life is set upon it.
Passion! oh name it not! True love is that
Which thrills the soul with holy ecstasies
And raptures of ethereal perfect bliss—
The latent dross of passion purified—
Heart beats to heart with heavenly sympathies.
Since royalty must pair with royalty,
I'll rather pluck the bauble from my brow,
Than play the traitor to a youth so brave!

Arella. 'Tis well our fancies are so various;
For thus the varied works of earth are prized.
So let thy will be free. I do not look
Through the same eyes or hues of light as you,
And therefore are my likings different;
And yet I do confess I could have wished
The gods had made that stranger youth my brother.

Linda. There shall be more of this ere long; my soul

Is on the rack. Oh for a life with him!
I cannot rest until I call him mine—
The living idol of my burning soul!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter EVANDER, PETRO, AND ALENSUS.

Evander. Harsh discord is abroad; and civil war,
With all its terrible calamities,
O'erhangs the land. The angry thunder-cloud,
Sulphuric-charged, is just about to burst,
Putrid and withering; and the lurid flash
To scatter baleful vapours o'er our heads
And earth, distempered, frets and fumes the while.

Petro. War, then, is certain?

Aleusus. Certain, sir, be sure;
For as I passed along, the vulgar shouts
Did rend the heavens—liberty or death!
Standards, and plumes, and banners towered aloft
In thick confusion. It doth fret me much
Thus to cast off the sober garb of peace,
And to the wars!

Evander. I do lament the cause,
Though every soldier burns at the result,
And, through the vista of the future, sees
Fresh deeds of honour bidding him approach.

Aleusus. The hours of peace for me, with all its stores
Of ease and dalliance and virgin's sighs,
And midnight dance, and midnight revel too.

What sayest thou, Petro?

Petro. Quite at one, my Lord.

Alensius. Yet when the drum of war assails the ear
In stubborn music, and the enemy's howl,
With dark forebodings, sweeps along the hill,
It likes me; and the bustling noisy camp
Kindles the embers of my glowing soul
To tenfold flame; then nature does put on
Her brightest aspect, and the icy snows
And starry skies their grandest mood display;
'Tis then the spirit of heroic man
Assumes the god, and deeds of chivalry
Thicken around to vindicate his claim!

Enter BRENNUS.

Evander. War is decreed!

Brennus. Myself have witnessed it.
A band of desperadoes—lunatics—
Have, in a giddy moment, rashly launched
Their fragile bark upon the boisterous deep,
Helmless and pilotless, and stood for sea,
Wooing the storm! The tempest louder howls,
And in a moment o'erwhelms them all.

Evander. Such is their cure, and such shall ever be
The only cure of fretful malcontents.

Brennus. Themselves have sought it; yet, they could not crave
The issue from a more indulgent King,
For I will render to the full their wish.
The scourge of war is out; the arm that wields it
Tires not; the hellish mouth of ravenous death
Grins at each lash—yet is not satisfied.

Better to probe the gangrene to the quick
Than scar it over. When the sword is drawn
Let action sharpen it to keener edge—
Disuse brings rust, and sloth provokes decay.
Erect me gibbets numberless, and let
Each public path, each lane, each marketplace
Be garnished by a traitor hung in chains
Till his bones rattle in the winter's storm—
A naked skeleton! So shall the throne
Assert its proper high prerogative,
And teach rebellious vassals how to die!

Alensius. Lord Rufus leads the way—

Brennus. And first shall fall,
A patriotic martyr in the cause;
Leader in life and death, to pave the way
And point it out to his accomplices.
What can be baser than ingratitude,
Or merit sterner punishment? That man
Lay in my bosom—many a year enjoyed
The priceless boons that royalty bestows;
Now turns he viper, and attempts to sting
The breast that cherished him and gave him power!
True succours of my throne! each man, to arms!
Each to his post as duty urges! Now,
Let valour stir the soul to noble deeds—
Deeds worthy of ourselves and other days!
'Tis Brennus leads you on to victory!

[*A flourish. Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

The Woods.—Enter TIMON.

Timon. Alensius is a clever dog, and knows
The secret workings of the human mind.
The letter which, on his advice, was forged,
Must take effect, if that she love Evander—
So genuine it seemed in every word.
A rumour holds my father loves the girl!
It seems the old are getting young again,
And lusting too! I still supposed that age
Would cool our blood, and hoary hairs impart
The wisdom which our ardent youth doth lack.
But this is idle—man is still the same;
And threescore years, though sans vivacity,
Has all the appetite of gay sixteen!
Yet will I be revenged on him for this,
And from his forehead tear the diadem!—
Hush! here she comes, and in a musing mood.

[*Enter ARELLA; TIMON retires.*]

Arella. 'Tis not his wonted manner thus to meet me;
Nor is this written in his wonted style.

[*Looking at a letter which she holds in her hand.*]

I fear he thinks me doubting; this bad world
Makes one mistrust Divinity itself.
He has determined to communicate
Matters of great importance which, I guess,
Will be a consummation of his love.
I am prepared for such a conference.
But then the King!—his proffered suit—his love!

Would it be proper that I should reveal
To him I love the nature of the claim
Lately put forth? and by an uncle too!
A strange dilemma! but my heart is true,
Whatever obstacles present themselves,
Whether or not I tell them to my love.
Poor Linda knows not what a plight I'm in!
I dare not tell her; it would break her heart.

Exit ARELLA; re-enter TIMON.

Timon. It has worked well—the stratagem has won her,
And she is mine! The furies seize my soul
If such a conquest be not worth the pains
Bestowed upon it! Straight I'll follow her. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter BRENNUS AND A MURDERER.

Brennus. Where is thy fellow? has the deed been done?

Murderer. It hath, my Lord—he lies a ghastly corse,
Bleeding and mangled.

Brennus. Was the conflict tough?

Murderer. Ne'er would I wish to see the like again.

Brennus. But he is dead?

Murderer. Thine enemies and mine
Be such as Rufus is. We fell upon him,
Quick as the lightning's flash and grim as death.

Brennus. Such ever be the rebel's recompense!
There died the noblest and the fiercest spirit
That proudly towered, in these degenerate days—

The last survivor that I had to fear.
The enemy will lack his valour much.
He was, erewhile, my very faithful friend;
But latterly he changed his countenance
Into the evil looks of perfidy,
And wore sedition on his ruthless brow.
Now the rough winter of his life is past,
And I would have the winds blow softly o'er him—
I scorn to trample on a fallen foe.

How long hast thou been in my service now?

Murderer. Some dozen years or so.

Brennus. At the same trade—
Investing man with immortality?

Murderer. The same, your Highness.

Brennus. Thou hast well deserved,
And been a faithful and approved servant—
I will apportion thee thy fit reward;
Meet me to-morrow with the rising sun. [Exit MURDERER.]

I do not like when obstacles oppose,
But when my will is crossed, then blood must flow
To clear the course of foul impediments!
Oh for that magic art, which Renzas has,
To read the secrets of futurity,
And look upon the volume big with life
Which the time-furrowed sybils still indite!
Then could one shape his course accordingly,
And so fulfil what Fate hath else decreed.
The whispers which I heard are certainties,
As time may tell. Arella loves me not;—
But shall long seventeen years of favoured life

Give way to indolent and dull despair?
What though the realm should fall about my ears!
What though the world should crumble into dust!
What though adversity should call me hers,
And blood itself distil, like April showers,
From every quarter of the welkin's width—
Firm and collected I should still remain,
Hoarding my prowess till the storm were o'er;
Then should I call my latent vigour forth,
And make astounded Nature quake again,
Till the bright heavens themselves looked black as hell!
The tented camp-ground and the dreadful din
Of chariots filling up the lines of war
Befit this daring constitution well,
That soars as doth the eagle to the sun—
Scorning control, and smiles at death itself!
I'm so familiar with all scenes of blood,
That I could rest me, calm and passionless,
In the fond luxury of sweet repose,
On the same pillow where my friend lies slain. [Exit.

ACT III.—SCENE I.

A Cave in the Woods.

Enter CONLUS AND RENZAS.

Renzas. A royal sword! 'Tis Timon's, son of the King.

Conlus. Knowest thou the sword? I took it from the foe.
Where is the man who dares to challenge it?

Renzas. Youth's buoyant spirit still will show itself—
Thy soul is daring and for ever pants

After some bold adventurous exploit,
For which I laud thee;—'tis the golden test
Of high-born culture and nobility.
Tell me the nature of the enterprise?

Conlus. 'Twas sunshine; and my course, as usual, was
In the calm stillness of the morn to roam
Across the uplands, and invigorate
This mind and body by the air of heaven.
'Tis but indeed a melancholy thing,
And yet it suits my disposition well,
To wander lonely on the mountain side,
And shift from crag to crag, from sward to sward,
And sit me down, or loiter here or there,
And muse on any or on every thing.
Gazing enraptured—for on sights so fair
What eye can fix without a pearly drop
Bubbling spontaneous from its lucid font?—
My reverie was broken by the cries
Which reached me of a woman in distress;
Her piercing shrieks that rent the firmament,
The bitter loud outbreakings of despair,
Brought to my mind the storied tales of deeds
Of cruelty and wrong, and lent their aid
To guide my willing feet and nerve this arm.

Renzas. And was she rescued?

Conlus. Let this bright sword tell,
Which the proud youth in deadly anger drew
To chastise my presumption; but in vain—
I wrenched the gleaming falchion from his grasp,
And bade him live and be a better man!

Renzas. What and where is the woman?

Conlus. She had fled,

Safe and unscathed, ere the encounter ended—

No woman can endure the clang of arms.

Renzas. Virtue and vice for ever ebb and flow
Athwart the little ocean of man's heart.

Virtue now rolls along with gushing tide;
Then vice, with surging fury, stirs the depths;
Be it thine aim, through life, to combat vice
And cherish virtue, as thou dost to-day.

Conlus. I have a secret to divulge
Will fill thy bosom with astonishment.

Conlus. Let there be danger mingled in the tale,—
The more of hazard is the more of love.

Renzas. It is a secret dearer to this soul
Than life can furnish else;—and all my own.
I cannot see thee longer wander thus,
Under the mildews of these desert skies,
Lacking the nurture of society,
And rough as Nature's hands first moulded thee.
Thy spring of life is almost spent, and yet
But little of the ground is tilled and sown.
This precious portion of our human day,
When, in the customary paths of life,
The mind is fashioned and the man is formed,
Has been to thee a time of lethargy—
A kind of prior non-existent state;
And now has come the dawning of life's morn.
No longer art thou any son of mine!

Conlus. This is indeed a tale of mystery.

Renzas. Attend! and I will open thy sealed eyes,
Which ever have been blinded by a mist,
And cause them to behold such frightful sights,
As hell exceeds not with its devilish glare!
No marvel that thy spirit pants to soar,
And quit this desert waste, and take a part
In the grand theatre of man's exploits—
No marvel that thy father's son strove still
To reach beyond his present destiny,
Up to the fortunes which by right are thine.
Conlus was but a smiling infant when
I, wretched man! was asked to do the deed.
My hands had been inured to seas of blood
Of glory's victims in the strife of war;
But they had never dipped in gore like this,
And could not venture on the innocent.
I managed to conceal thee, and invent
A falsehood telling of thy early death!

Conlus. And is my unknown father still alive?

Renzas. He fell beneath the hand that sought thy life.

Conlus. Is this hell-monster yet to meet his doom?

Say that he lives, and tell the whereabouts—
Set him before me, and the savage, whom
His cruelty hath nurtured in the wilds,
Shall show him what a savage can effect!
My father died beneath a villain's dagger,
And I to live! and know him unavenged!

Renzas. Conlus, my son (for I shall still retain
This cherished laurel which my love once gained),
Be calm! let light of reason never pale

Under the lurid glare of wickedness!
Some things are in themselves so horrible,
That, coming all at once, with sudden shock
The seat of reason may be overturned,
And life itself, in frequent case, rush back
To its stunned centre, and revert no more!
Now this rehearsal is of such a kind.
I love thee well; thy welfare is my own;
And, therefore, has the dreadful tale been told:
But know that what is done is done for ever—
The Book of Fate ne'er alters its decrees.
Thou hast survived in health and strength till now,
Though storms blew hard and dangers gathered round;
And thou shalt live to hail a brighter day,
The sacred admiration of the throng
Seeming more brilliant from thy long eclipse!

Conlus. Father! for that loved name is dear to me,
This life which thou didst cherish shall be spent
In showing filial gratitude to thee.

Renzas. Meanwhile, thou must become a man, and mix
With men, and learn their ways of changeful life;
For I affirm thy future sphere will need
All that thou knowest and more than may be learned.
Far as my antiquated lore, I have
Been tutor to thy studies, and instilled
A thirst for honour and a virtuous life.
Illicit love has a peculiar charm
To man, who still will do what God forbids;—
Harden thy heart against it as a flint,
And ne'er despise the lessons of thy youth.

Be noble-minded, candid, generous;
Yet trust not each deceiver that appears
In the good airs and manners of a saint,
For there are men, who put on virtue's garb,
Deceitful as the rolling flood by night.
Store well thy mind with lore of classic books,
Ancient and modern—so thou ever hast
A fund of thought on which to meditate
And draw, to guide thy life's emergencies.
With such a store thou never art alone,
But still hold'st fellowship with noblest men—
The best and most renowned of human blood;
And when the snows of age fall on thy head,
Thou still may'st press these comrades to thy heart,
And by their warmth life's winter's cold repel.

Conlus. Courage is virtue of the noblest kind,
And wholly incompatible with vice,
Which always is to cowardice allied.

Renzas. Virtue is power—in man and woman power,
That heaven-born child of truth and charity,
And, God-like, wheresoever it exists,
Strength to repel and wisdom to protect
Are found with all their potent energies;
It makes the weakest as a lion brave;
Its very presence is a tower of strength
That causes the assailant's heart to quail;
A look, a frown, proclaims it conqueror!

Conlus. Arm me with virtue, and I walk secure
In all the native dignity of man.

Renzas. Vice never can confront an honest man,

But courts the secret dens where villains lurk,
And steeps their deadened souls in selfishness.

Conlus. Words not unworthy of a sage renowned,
But doubly prized when from a father's lips.

Renzas. In all thy movements be thou just and kind;—
Rude force doth much, but loving kindness more.
If ever thou would'st win the hearts of men,
It can't be by the sword; 'tis love alone
Will conquer and subdue them to thyself.

Conlus. But what with love and law at enmity?

Renzas. The law commands, and when 'tis disobeyed
Visits the culprit with a rod of iron—
But not reclaims him; still he disobeys,
And still the rod of iron must have course.
So different when love entreats—dear love,
That with soft accents, sweet, allures the ear,
And touches all the tender chords of man;
He is convinced of guilt—repents—reforms—
And strives henceforth to lead a blameless life:
Thus works the sovereign power of sympathy.
And now, with these advices, let us part—
Go, and be blessed, as far as I can bless.

Conlus. Into my soul these precious counsels sink,
Which I shall never willingly let die,
But try to live them out in after life.
I must not, cannot, will not leave thee long!

Renzas. Beware! say nought of what nor whence thou art.
There is a dress I once was vain of, when
Gay youth smiled on me, and 'tis yet preserved,
A fragment of the things of other years—

A precious one; let's hence and fit it on.

Conlus. Mysterious lot! the vista of the past
Fills my mind's eye with strange perplexities.
He lives, and yet I know the monster not!
In such a plight I cannot long remain,—
My ignorance but fans the smothered flame.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Royal Camp.

Enter BRENNUS AND EVANDER by night.

Brennus. The breath of heaven is raw—

Evander. And biteth keenly;

Yet there is something stirring in its cold,
When expectation fires the inner man.

Brennus. A kind of melancholy still absorbs
(Wherefore I know not) this impatient soul,
The night before a great event. The future
Starts up all clothed in dark habiliments,
And weighs my spirit down, till action calls
The sinking man again to energy.

Evander. I have felt so too; the state is natural.
Had we not better, for the sake of speed,
And as the morning nears, divide the work?

Brennus. 'Twere well we do so. We then meet again,
Here, at this old and ruined battlement.

[*Exeunt; enter TIMON.*]

Timon. So far as human calculation goes,
The rebel flag shall proudly plume to-morrow—
The field its own! Brennus of late hath been

To me a mortal foe. It suits my stomach
To meet him in the hostile attitude
Of stout rebellion; for this giddy head
Already aches it for the golden round.
Thus shall I make the cause of liberty
The stepping-stone to set me on the throne;
And then Arella, in despite of fate
And braggart boys that dare disturb man's mirth,
Shall furnish forth a morsel to my board!

[Exit.

[Scene changes to the Rebel Camp.]

Enter CELSUS AND MENTOR.

Mentor. The pioneer of freedom often falls,
And wears the martyr's crown; and from his blood
True men will spring, with power to avenge his death,
And the rich prize for which he struggled win!

Celsus. Rufus has fallen by the murderer's dagger!
Hirelings of Brennus! blood will never cease
To irrigate the land! The thirsting wolf
Cries not enough, but lingers for its prey
Till every victim bleeds!

Mentor. 'Tis our turn next;
And yet the contest will be glorious!
My resolution is to do or die—
To lead my patriot troops to victory;
Or, with my life's blood, close the sacred struggle
Of truth and freedom, and with them expire!

[Exit CELSUS; enter TIMON.

Mentor. A friend or foe?

Timon. A friend of liberty.

I come to drag the tyrant from his throne!

Mentor. Is this the bearing of a duteous son
Towards the crown—to hail a rebel flag
And wield the sword that's sharpened for his sire?
Or art thou here a wily visitor,
To spy our movements, and report our state?

Timon. Oft has this bosom longed to see the scathe
Inflicted hourly on my countrymen
Avenged! Still, as I grew, my wonder was
They bore the scorpion rod so patiently.
I fondly trusted that a day would dawn
When liberty would yet adorn the throne;
Or when some glorious effort would be made
To vindicate the trampled rights of man!
Thus am I here, in good sincerity,
To lend a weak, but not reluctant aid—
To enlist my name and fortunes on your side,
And wait the issue. And I fear it not;
And who will fear it if they once compare
The motives and the men of either line—
The brave and free to meet the coward slave,
The volunteer—a mercenary foe?
The blessed gods themselves are all with us
And bid us prosper;—every thing is ours!

Mentor. I give thee the right hand of fellowship,
Full glad thou hast not come a day too late.
The son now fights to snatch the father's crown,
And light his triumph by the funeral torch!
But let me speed, and make the tidings known
Among the eager troops. 'Twill cheer the brave,
And help to nerve the faltering soul to duty.

[*Exeunt.*]

[Scene changes to the Royal Camp.]

Enter BRENNUS.

Brennus. 'Tis night, and Nature, shrunk into herself,
Woos her repose. Now, o'er the sleeping world
The spirits of the desert wander forth
To hold their revels. Now the murderer
Unsheathes his dagger, and, like Beelzebub,
Howls for his morsels! Now the flitting ghost
Forsakes its dank and clay-cold tenement
And courts the moon-beam.—'Tis a solemn hour
To wander thus alone! The foe is there,
And death lurks near him;—looming through the dark,
The grisly spectre flaps his horrent wings,
While fitful sounds from hoarse and gurgling throats
Announce his presence! From the dying fires
That flicker, sickly, through the dismal gloom,
The change of watch, the neighing of the steeds,
The coward's whisper, and the hero's oath,
With here and there a solitary note
Of preparation for the fatal work,
Split the dun air and come the harbingers
Of dreadful doings on the approaching morn!
The raven's croak, heard from afar, anon
Sounds louder and affrights the troubled skies!

Enter EVANDER.

Evander. The enemy appears to be secure,
All unsuspecting of our near approach.

Brennus. The better for our purpose; 'tis most meet
That expedition should be used. They sleep,

And wake not till eternity is theirs.

Meanwhile we get the troops in readiness.

[*Exeunt.*]

[*Scene changes to the Rebel Camp.*]

Enter TWO CITIZENS.

1st Citizen. I hear the battle is to rage to-night.

2d Citizen. So let it rage, if I were once away.

1st Citizen. But liberty shall triumph;—cheer thy soul,
And prove thyself a man by deeds of might!

2d Citizen. But is there no way of avoiding death?
He is the demon that prevents those deeds
That would do honour to a hero's sword.

1st Citizen. My voice is still for liberty or death!

2d Citizen. And mine for life whatever should befall!
Away with arms; and do your duty, heels!

1st Citizen. Base, treacherous coward! must I fight alone?
I hasten to assist my fellow-men—
Comrade of him who still can face the foe!

Enter 3D CITIZEN.

3d Citizen. This work is hard; I fear we shall not win.

Enter MENTOR AND CELSUS.

[*The trumpet sounds to war.*]

Mentor. Summon the troops! Good citizens, awake!
The hand of treachery has triumphed o'er us.

Enter BRENNUS, EVANDER, ALENSUS, PETRO, AND TROOPS.

Brennus. To victory! The word is victory!

[*A Battle ensues; after a severe contest, MENTOR, CELSUS, AND
CITIZENS take to flight; the Royal Party follows them.*]

Enter TIMON.

Timon. I was too rash! Already all is lost,
And I undone for ever! Can it be

That I have cast the golden gem away,
And life to boot, to aid the poorest rogues
That ever looked an onset in the teeth?
My only course is on to victory—
Close in the rear, among the royal troops,
And, like a son, support a father's cause!
But then the villain Mentor may betray me,
In mercy to himself. [*Enter MENTOR.*] Gods! here he comes,
Fit object for my new-born loyalty.
Now for the King, the Throne, and Victory!
{*He rushes at MENTOR, and runs a sword through his body.*

MENTOR *dies.* *Meanwhile enter BRENNUS AND EVANDER.*]

Brennus. Bravo! my son—great image of thy sire,
And stalwart bulwark of the royal throne!

Timon. (*Aside.*)

And yet he's but a traitor at the best,
And plays a part that smacks of cowardice!
Already hath this single arm to-night
Done more of valeur, and sent more to hell,
Than twenty years have yet accomplished!

Brennus. The havoc is tremendous! My brave troops
Keep steady to their work, and love it well.
There's very few shall see the morning light
Of that proud band that slept along the plain!
Rebellion never did sustain a shock
More thorough in its power to cleanse and cure!
So battle furiously the tempest's blasts,
As in mid air dark cloud strikes angry cloud,
The thunder rages with sky-piercing roar,
The lightnings flash, and scar and split the rocks,

Uproot the forests with destructive sweep,
And sear the plains, and burn up man and beast.
'Tis thus that Nature purifies herself,
Dispels bad vapours, stirs and drains foul pools,
Clears and sets free from taint the atmosphere,
And makes the earth fit residence for man!

Evander. Let the snows fall, and cover from our eyes
The desolations of the battle-field—
Robing the ghastly dead and reddened earth
In fleecy flakes of spotless purity! [Trumpets heard.]

Brennus. The welkin rings with the loud trumpets blare,
And pours forth joyous notes of victory!
[Exeunt after the foe. A flourish.]

SCENE III.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter EVANDER AND ARELLA.

Evander. My course of life has been the tented field;
The march my walk; the sword my exercise.
Unused to warble music and rehearse
A love-sick story in a lady's ear,
My words are weapons, and my actions arms,
Which clothe me in uncouth habiliments.

Arella. Thou art a soldier! is it perfidy
To be a hero in the nation's cause?

Evander. But though my outward man may frown on thee,
With visage stern and brow of treble brass,
Thrusting forbiddance out at every pore,
Yet is my bosom made of gentler stuff.

There is a corner of my heart for love,
And in that corner thou dost reign supreme.

Arella. I think I know it, and have marked it long.
Thou art at least no heartless hypocrite;
And though it may not suit our sex's colour,
Which nurtures all the tints of modesty,
Yet shall I be no hypocrite to thee.

Evander. Ecstatic sounds! to me more dear by far
Than seraph's raptures, thrilling in the skies
And heard at midnight! Long have I aspired
To breathe the whispers of my trembling soul
Into thy ear. The hour at length has come
When these are heard, and thou art wholly mine!
Though the fatigues and dangers of the past
Were tenfold more appalling than they were,
Yet would I bear them all again, and deem
The labour light to gain the same reward.

Arella. Ay, but I sicken at the courtier's smiles,
The adulation, pomp, and vain parade
That in this world, where rank alone is worth,
Float ever round the persons of the great.
Trust me, I would I were away from court!
The air pollutes me! I am much distressed!
But for sweet Linda I were miserable.

Evander. Arella is the goddess of my soul!
Where'er thou art that place is heaven to me!
It is not in the lap of luxury
That happiness resides. Wealth cannot woo,
With all its gilded ornaments to boot,
The calm and blessing that attend the good.

The poor man peeps from out his tattered garb
That the wind shakes, and thinks the courtier blessed
Whose robes are stretching comfort to the ground;
And knows not that 'tis oftener the reverse!
New comforts bear new wants and new desires,
And still the man remains unsatisfied.
Can proud Ambition look on scenes like this,
Nor feel his heart as frigid as the ice,
With such a lack of happiness for dole?
Hence, rampant war! and all thy fiery broils,
Thy ambuscades, and wasting fields of strife,
Searching for honour where no honour lies,
And happiness where it was never found!
Evander is a-weary of thy lore.
Some haunt that bounteous Nature hath adorned,
And solitary sadness sanctified,
Will be to us a refuge from the scowl
And the distortions of an evil time.
I'll to the King, and crave His Majesty
To smile on our designs and grant me quittance
From active duty, or at court or field.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.*A Room in the Palace.**Enter BRENNUS.*

Brennus. Rebellion has been crushed, and civil war
Surceased her carnage. Now the hours of peace
Lap the survivors in their silken robes,
And clothe in harvest fields of richest growth,

Where sword and battle-axe but lately gleamed,
Blasting the blessings of fertility.
The veteran soldier, counting o'er his scars,
Sits smiling by the thorn-tree of his youth,
And tells his tale of war to the apt ear
Of the erst dull tenant of the lowly cot.
Thus ocean, vex'd by a terrific storm,
Engulphs a thousand victims in its depths,
And then, ere long, in calm serenity,
Scarce shows a ripple on its placid breast!
Now, leisure lends her aid to prosecute
Affairs of love; Arella shall be mine,
And that ere long; 'tis either love or death;
Decide and execute, my motto runs—
A silly woman dare to say me nay
Who owes her life to my humanity!

Enter TIMON.

Some new disaster has not crossed our path!—

Timon. Evander and Arella—

Brennus. Are in love?

Why, then, conjecture has outrun the fact.
I had anticipated the result,
And so provided me a remedy.
Love is a phrensy of the fevered brain—
The engendering of peevish idleness,
And needs as much a draught medicinal
As a deep-rooted obdurate disease.
Arella stands in need of such a draught,
And I have such a draught prepared for her.
There is the reason why she cannot love,

And yet is amorous as lust itself!

Timon. Am I not then to share in the revenge?

Brennus. There is for everything a fitting time.

The meanest matter in a foolish hand

Produces serious mischief, and annuls

The 'cumulated labours of the wise.

Discretion and a knowledge of mankind

Are coadjutors, of eternal worth

In this precarious world of shoals and quicksands.

Arella will indeed require a draught—

The when and where are topics for hereafter.

But it shall be a potion mingled so

That it will carry her to heaven or to hell.

Timon. What of Evander? Shall the traitor live,

And forge an endless chain of discontents?

Brennus. Well judged, my boy! If he were let alone,

Venomed with poison, like an ugly worm,

He'd spread a canker o'er the goodly tree.

Crush him, and so prevent this dire disease!

But yet, Evander has a gallant soul,

And heretofore has exercised it well—

A stanch promoter of my purposes.

Ambition is the engine of his deeds,

As this disclosure eminently tells;

Ambition, therefore, shall procure his ruin,

For I will turn the engine on himself

And tear him piecemeal! Such shall be his end.

Go to, my son! Evander is thy charge—

He shall be sent a mission—thou, with others,

Shall follow—an untimely death his end!

Oh, I have ever rioted in death!
The mountain torrent, rushing o'er the steep,
Spreads not more havoc on the plain when Heaven
Opens her sluices and the waters gush,
Than hath this single arm, to vengeance bared,
Deluged the land with blood, and caused to run
The purple current of nobility!
Time was when these keen eyes could pierce the veil
And of men's souls the hidden depths explore;
But age has wrapped them in her mistful shroud
And robbed them of their former energies.
Yet still prosperity is everywhere—
And the bright beaming sun shines merrily.
Let's go and set about this thing betimes. [Exeunt.

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

The Woods.—Enter LINDA.

Linda. This pleasing solitude unfolds a charm
Which all the pomp and luxury of court
Cannot inspire. Nature's own voice is here,
And sounds responsive to my beating heart;
But yet to me this spot affords a bliss
More sacred far; and I do love these haunts
Above the rest of nature's solitudes,
For here this bosom first did dare to love.

[Enter CONLUS at a distance.

Conlus. Now do I enter on this medley world
To watch its dotard eccentricities. [Aside.

Linda. 'Tis he; and born to captivate the heart!

Corrosive care perturbs his manly brow—
That canker to youth's bloom,—and yet the shade
That hangs upon his cheek is beautiful.

Conlus. He would not tell me who my father was,
Nor who the monster is that murdered him;
But swore that I should live to be revenged.
Ah! who comes here? Was ever form so fair?
I dare not speak to her; and yet I must—
Youth's noted rashness my apology.

[*Aside.*]

Fearest thou not to wander thus alone?

Linda. Kind youth! the heart, indulging its own mood,
Finds a companion in these solitudes.

Conlus. But then a wicked world! Wherefore this sigh?

Linda. It is my wonted manner thus to sigh;
So think not of it. Did the hour admit,
I could extol these favourite haunts of mine,
Which are my daily joys;—but fare-thee-well!
A father's jealous eye is now upon me.

[*Exit LINDA.*]

Conlus. I had a heart I late could call my own;
A moment, and I feel that it is gone!
I saw and spoke—I spoke, and am enslaved!
The image, lately floating in my brain,
Of beauty, truth, and goodness, all combined,
Centres in her, the bless'd reality
And lovely idol whom I now adore!

Enter BRENNUS.

Brennus. A little pleasure and a little pain,
A little sunshine and a little cloud,
Fill up the measure of our little lives!
Fortune is plenished with variety,

And we receive it from her equal hands. [He sees CONLUS.

Eternal gods! defend this aged heart!

Withdraw that hated image from these eyes!

Is it a spectre? Flesh and blood are there,

And youth sits smiling on his dappled cheek!

'Tis life itself—reality itself—

The very person of my murdered brother,

Adorned with all the dignity of Heaven,

Come from the tomb to harrow my vexed soul!

Conlus. Some strange delusion flits athwart his mind!

Brennus. He has a voice—it is reality;—

He comes at length to execute revenge!

[BRENNUS falls down insensible; he recovers, and is
helped up by CONLUS.]

Conlus. The fruits of long and obstinate disease;—

It takes away the better part of man,

And renders reason a mere useless dream!

Brennus. And yet it is not altogether he;—

Impossible the child is yet alive! [Aside.

Conlus. Methinks thou hast regained thy health and strength.

Brennus. It is not with me as in former times—

A bare idea to unhinge me so! [Aside.

Young man! I am indebted to thee much

For the attentions thou hast rendered me.

There is a kind of intermittent plague

Which age and hardships have entailed on me;

It threatens loudly, but soon dies away,

And leaves me well as formerly, though faint.

But prithee, tell me whence and what thou art,

That I may do thee favour?

Conlus. But a stranger,
And unaccustomed to society.

Brennus. Thy name and errand?

Conlus. Just a stranger here,
And not in love with much society.

Brennus. This strengthens my suspicions more and more. [*Aside.*
Then let us wander slowly o'er the turf
And trace the varied beauties of the scene,
For they are good, and many, and attract
The wondering eyes of travellers from afar.
There is a mountain that they all ascend;
There arbours green where all delight to rest;
There wells a spring at which all love to drink—
It flows in streamlets o'er the grassy plains,
At once to beautify and fertilize
The fragrant downs where pasture flocks and herds.
Nature appears, in wanton luxury,
To lavish all her richest treasures here!
The ravished ear is filled with melodies
Of the sweet warblers of the woodland wild;
Odours, how grateful to the sense of smell!
Float through the air on every breath of wind;
And in mid winter, when the frosts and snows
Cover the earth, when hill and dale have shed
Their verdure, glistening icicles adorn
Each dripping rock and tower; the banks and brakes,
And streamlet's margins fringed with icy spears;
The scene ne'er fails in beauty and delight—
What ho! within! ho, guards!
Conlus. My lord! my lord!

[Enter Guards, who seize him and lead him off the stage.]

Brennus. Lock up this fellow in the inmost cell,
And watch his person with a double guard!
Be what he will, the fates have made him mine,
And he shall be so till I'm satisfied.
Accursed day! the blessed gods themselves
Are spreading death and havoc o'er the world!
Something portentous in his silence lurks,
And bare suspicion is enough for me!
I cannot live in doubt a single day,
And will not, for a world of boyish lives!
There is a something kingly in his brow
That much recalls the features of my brother,
And still more certainly those of his child!
But can it be that Conlus 'scaped his doom?
The old magician must have cut him off;—
Be well assured of that,—and there's an end.
Better to be at rest, and know the worst;—
A mind uncertain is a mind distressed.
This will I do—I'll to the forest straight!
No man shall know of such a prisoner,
Nor what the further purport of my schemes.
Renzas must clear this mystery up, or both
Shall meet the fate my kindled wrath demands!
Smile, Fates again! More blood must yet be shed,
And plot o'er plot is pressing to the goal;
But all shall prosper when ye give the word!
This bosom grasps the turmoils of the day
Which night shall quell and darkness bear away!

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter TIMON, ALENSUS, AND PETRO.

Alensus. Thy story makes me mad—discomfited
And thwarted, in the moment of desire
And at the nicest point—torn from thy aim
And schooled into submissive reverence—
Beggarly schooled, and by a beggar boy!

Timon. Let the proud virgin revel in her triumph—
Live while to live is yet within her power;
Revenge shall come! What a dull dog was I
To startle so at absolutely nothing!
A woman's cheek that but more ruddy glowed—
A woman's voice that but more shrilly screamed—
And a raw youth that came to rescue her!
That word, revenge, is fuel to my soul,
And bids each gentler feeling fly remote—
Fires my cold heart and gives it life again.
Have patience, Timon, thou shalt be revenged!

Alensus. Thy wounded pride demands an antidote.
Nothing more fit to stay the sore chagrin
A worsted suitor feels than dire revenge.
A prince is not to be confined and curbed,
Like common men, in love's impassioned course—
He may embrace the universal sex
In his large heart and roam where fancy lists.

Petro. And what is to be done?

Alensus. Feed on her smiles.
Oft have I seen the arrow miss the mark,

And quick from alien bow return to wound
The hand it came from; yet at length it fell,
Death-winged, upon the foe with victory;—
Despair not, and Arella yet is yours!
Now that the iron front of grisly war
Is softened down to peace, we want intrigues
To give us exercise, and warm the blood
That else would stagnate;—youth must have its day!

Timon. Do not despair! I never did despair—
She shall be mine! and I shall triumph o'er her,
Though the next motion be the flaming sword
That quivers in her heart and shrieks revenge!

Alensius. After this night's adventure in the woods,
The prize is certain.

Petro. I do think so too.

Timon. The King, my father, hath arranged it so
That we are sure to find Evander there.

Alensius. At noon of night this lover shall be slain.
I took Evander for a man of proof—
One that had seen some service in the wars;
But, faith, he seats him by a woman's side,
And doffs the day in idle gossiping!

Timon. 'Tis more than time his frolics had an end!
They stop my way;—he must be moved aside!
We meet again at the appointed spot.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Before the Prison.

Enter LINDA.

Linda. Oft the wild flower that decks the mountain side

Is lovelier far than that the garden owns!
So 'tis with him on whom my heart is set.
Love permeates with bliss a woman's heart,
Like a pure stream; but sometimes brings with it
The swelling turbid waters of a flood,
That rages vehemently along its banks
Till the breast aches with terror and distress;—
Such now my case, it grieves me to confess.
Anger, malignant tyrant of the soul!
How dost thou make of man a slave? thou break'st
Through all the hallowed bonds of law and truth
And liberty, to crush thy helpless foe!
But shall he whom the regal throne itself
Cannot add more of grace or dignity
Lie rotting in a cold and nasty cell—
He without whom this world were but a wild?
This hand shall work a rescue presently,
Or rashly perish in the good attempt!

[Exit LINDA into the Prison.]

Enter BRENNUS.

Brennus. Renzas hath left his cave. I saw him not;
But I shall shortly visit him again;
The youth is still secure and in my power.
Evander but performs one duty more,
And then he finds his heart's desire fulfilled
In bless'd retirement from this bustling world!
Arella will be spared a little space
Till I resolve maturely on my plans.
It is, indeed, a sorry thing to live
And be a creature of intelligence!

I sound the depths and shoals of human life—
Try to discover whence and what I am,
And whither bound at Death's imperious call;
But find no bottom for my grappling-irons—
A fathomless dark sea—no solid ground
Where, like vexed barque, my troubled soul may anchor,
And ride secure o'er every angry wave.
But wherefore cavil at the sovereign will
That formed and left me thus with doubt perplexed?
Why not be glad? He made me what I am,
With reason blessed, and earthly dignity.
Conscience! thou stirring monitor, whose voice
Is the true echo of divinity
Resounding in the atmosphere of man,
I have a long and ghostly catalogue
Of charges to indict thy zeal withal!
Get thee behind, and leave me to myself—
So shall I be a tenfold happier man!
The day is full of fearful incidents—
Adventures strange and dire vicissitudes,
Imminent dangers, wonderful escapes!
The night is fraught with devilish phantasies,
Distressing dreams, and fierce imaginings!
Pale Hecate's ministers are all astir
To torture me with new unheard-of plagues!
Sleep, the true medicine of human life—
Heaven's balsam to the feverish and the faint,
That leads the culprit from his prison house,
And strikes the chains from off the traitor's limbs;
Sleep that makes Melancholy's self to smile

And nightly quit her rueful realms of woe
For fairy regions of a land of bliss,
To me brings sights of death and ugly dreams,
And has become my direst enemy!
Tell me, ye heavenly gods! will none of you
Stoop from the temple which your glory fills,
And deign to answer me? Is there no state,
Celestial and incapable of change,
To which this mortal vigour may attain?
I thought to find it on a kingly throne,
Where earthly grandeur lavishes her smiles—
The envy and the idol of the world;
But disappointment spread its canker there
And blasted the fruition ere it bloomed!
The restless soul, confined in tenement
Of flesh and blood, would fain put off these clogs
That weigh him down to earth, and soar aloft
To spheres as spiritual as himself!
That were a state of bliss, beyond all bliss,
Where truth and virtue should for ever reign.
Could such a realm of happiness be mine?
It might be mine, if I did but repent,
And live the new life of an altered man.
Shall I not try it? No, it is too late.
Hence, ye base vapours of a heated brain!
I've strayed too far along this devious track
To dream of turning; onward must I press,
Although its windings carry me to hell.

[Exit BRENNUS.]

Enter CONLUS AND LINDA.

Linda. Now, Conlus! let there be no more delay;

The danger thou art in urges despatch—
Secure thy safety by a speedy flight!

Conlus. And shall I leave thee to a father's frown?

No, never can I act a part so foul;
Still let me gaze upon those charms of thine!
Conlus can now no more be called himself—
His bosom vibrates in another sphere;
Thou art that sphere, and thy love is his heaven!
Yon cell shall rather be my burial-place
Than I will hazard even a lock of thine!

Linda. I stand thy freedom's surety to my sire,
And wilt thou not accept? Has liberty
Lost all her charms to woo thee to herself?

Conlus. Weep not; for tears of thine are precious drops
That never should be shed, save when the cry
Of sorrow claims their sympathising dew.
I cannot leave thee to a father's wrath.

Linda. Imaginary dread! He will not frown.

Conlus. Then, for the present, sharp necessity
Compels me to depart; how like the coward
That trembles at the storm himself has raised
And shuns its danger! but the coming dawn
Shall find me at my post, where duty calls,
Strong in the consciousness of innocence.

Linda. Thou'lt think of her who helped to set thee free?

Conlus. That thought not death itself can e'er destroy,
Or root thy dearest impress from this heart;—
In the abodes of bliss I'll chant thy name,
And love as angels do! Now for the cave
Without delay.

[*Exit CONLUS.*]

Linda. I made him free! Life's self
Is not so sweet as doing such an act.
The love of woman is unfathomable!
What is't she will not dare for him she loves?
A father's ire, a mother's dear reproof,
When matched with it, alike are impotent!
He is my sun—with him are light, and health,
And life—without him darkness, sickness, death!
The dews of heaven drop not more silently,
Refreshing herb and flower with health and growth,
Than fall his precious words into my heart,
And nerve my soul with vigour for the work!
The gushing well-springs of my woman's heart,
When pierced with love, flow like a mighty stream!
Who could have guessed that ever youth so fair
Should have provoked a single enemy?
But so it is; the noblest and the best
Are still the marks which envy loves to hit.
His liberation may incense my sire,
Who sometimes far o'ersteps humanity
In the hot pursuance of a favourite plan;
But love admits not of philosophy,—
Logic is useful in the sciences,
But its renowned and bookish mysteries
Possess no sympathy with ardent love,—
As well attempt to reason with the fool
As logic-bind that soul-subduing power!

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.

*The Woods.**Enter EVANDER.*

Evander. Within these confines this magician dwells,
Pensive and marked with deep philosophy—
The solitary habitant of all.
What can the fellow have designed? or what
Designing can a man so truly wild
Have the temerity to put to proof?
Methinks—a light! or is it but a glance,
Engendered by the forest and the air,
That flashes for a moment and expires?
A noise of voices!—natives of the woods,
That live by preying on their fellow-men;
Or can it be the howling of the wind?

Enter TIMON, ALENSUS, AND PETRO.

Timon. A little farther still.

Alensus. This place will do.

Keep close and wait his coming; he recks not
The sudden death that shortly must be his!

Petro. Is not thy father privy to the plot?

Timon. We have his prayer. 'Twas he that whispered it.

Evander. I heard a voice even now; which way it went
Let's follow, for it issues from the cave.
In this remote and silent wilderness
No human foot can wander thus alone
But his at such an hour.

Timon. Show yourselves men!

Evander. Blood-thirsty villains! think upon your lives!

[*The three rush out upon EVANDER, who defends himself manfully; CONLUS enters and takes his part; and after a good deal of fighting the three fall down.*]

Timon. The chance of fortune has been on his side,
And death is ours.—I feel his icy hand;
Nature reels round and hastens to a point.
Curse on the sword that did not strike the blow!
Curse on the stranger who assisted him!
Curse on myself, choke-full of wretchedness,—
Infernal horrors my eternal doom!

[*Dies.*]

Conlus. Oppression riots headlong through the world,
And innocence itself is barely safe.

Evander. It is, it must be he! Treacherous youth!
That had not soul enough to challenge me
In open field, but takes a viler course—
To perpetrate his murders in the dark!
Come, see the lustful Timon fallen now
Into a loathsome carcase!—his sunk eye
Glares hollow in the nothingness of death!
But he would have it so: and these, his friends,
Wooing destruction, have been satisfied.
Brave stranger! I do owe this life to thee;—
Thy deeds shall draw down blessings on thy head.
The countenance is true index to the mind;—
All the emotions of the inner man
Portray their workings on his outward form;—
The passions show themselves in well-marked signs—
Grief, fear, and scorn with gloom impress the face;
While hope and joy emblazon it with light.
Man's features are so formed, that in their use

Traces indelible will gather there
To mark the usual temper of the soul,
So that a gracious aspect love proclaims
In the bright beaming smiles of lips and eyes;
Whereas, hate, anger, and revenge conspire
To mar the visage with distorted lines.
I like thy face;—thou art an honest man!

Conlus. I did no more in bringing thee relief
Than duty and humanity enjoined;
For in these times of havoc and alarm,
Each moment has its share of fear and danger.
But wherefore dost thou wander through these wilds?
Art thou well-knowing in their winding paths?

Evander. In search of a rude cave, inhabited
By an old man, who has conspired against
The Government.

Conlus. Thou tell'st me news indeed!

Evander. If thou hast any knowledge of his haunt—

Conlus. I know him well, and well I know his cave.
But what of that? A foe of his is mine;
And this stout arm shall wither on its stem
Ere it makes parley with the enemy!

Evander. In man or woman truth is beautiful—
Flashes like lightning through the vault of heaven,
And never fails to pierce and win the heart!
Give me thy hand;—a tear rolls down this cheek
To him who holds a friend or father dear;—
A weapon wielded in paternal cause
Becomes the wearer well! I am alone,
And bear no malice to this same old man;

Yet would I like to set my eyes on him,
For sure I am the sire of such a son
Can lift his head above the calumnies
That little spirits ever circulate
Against the good and noble of their times!

Conlus. Then come with me; the cave is near at hand,
And I have many things to tell, and strange!
Much wilt thou marvel at this same old man,—
Though dwelling in the wilds, I often deem
That he has witnessed more auspicious days;
But now this way of life is dear to him,
And innovation of whatever kind
He shuns as out of keeping with his aims.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.—SCENE I.*A Room in the Palace.**Enter BRENNUS.*

Brennus. Ye mystic sisters! write your book of fate
In dark obscurity's unfathomed caves;
And let the words you pen and lines you weave
Be steeped in blood till crimsoned is the page.
Dark and mysterious although it seem,
It shall be brought to clearest light of sun,
With not one deed of horror unfulfilled!
'Tis mine to be your instrument to-night.
Night's noon shall come—the earth shall sleep in gloom,
Silence sit mantled on her sunless head,
And nature, wearied nature, lulled to rest,
Shall dream in grateful slumbers till the dawn.

But there is one shall never hail the light—
One who shall fall beneath this ruthless hand!
And fifty such would be to me the same,
Were they opponents of my sovereign will!
Arella's fatal hour is well-nigh come—
Her couch shall be her sepulchre to-night!
Evander and Arella live and love!—
Both shall be shrouded ere the morrow's sun!

[Exit.

SCENE II.

*A Cave in the Woods.**Enter EVANDER, CONLUS, AND RENZAS.*

Evander. 'Tis evident the King is in the plot;—
The time and place, and instruments attest it.
Conlus. Let us determine what is to be done.
Renzas. The full development of thy own tale
Follows a natural counterpart to this.
'Twere easy for me to declare the past
Without the provings of the Destinies.

Evander. But self is interested in the fact,
And may be thought to colour so the truth
That it assumes the character of falsehood,
Wanting the warrant of a stranger oath.

Renzas. Therefore, I leave the matter with the Gods,
And crave their everlasting seal upon it,
That it go forth unto the wondering world
Indubitable. Sisters mystic! hear
The call of one ye favour to obey!
Whether on earth, or air, or ocean's wave,

Ye hold sweet converse with this world's affairs,
And dole to every man his bit of life,
Attend! and come, or send your deputies,
To read the volumes where your records lie
Of time and all its passing vanities;—
Tell me of murders, that have slept for years
In the concealment of a careless throng!

[Spirits heard from behind the Scene.

Spirits. Conlus is a star of glory,
Royal heir and royal son;
Let Evander hear the story,
And the crown shall yet be won!

Renzas. No more, no more; the charm is at an end.

[The Spirits retire.

Evander. Conlus, all hail! King of the people, hail!

Renzas. Thyself alone art certain evidence
That all which has been now declared is true.

Evander. The very image of our late loved King!
I see his every lineament portrayed
In well-defined and deep-marked characters!
'Tis many winters since King Conlus rode
In glory in the vanguard of his troops,
Approving and reproving; yet full well
Do I remember his appearance there
For the last time; and when the tidings came
That he lay butchered cruelly in bed,
There's not a soldier but did drop a tear,
And mutter his suspicions of foul play!
Renzas. And on his brother's part.
Conlus. Can it be so?

My friends! with such a rapid change of-fortune
I feel bewildered; and these nerves, though strong,
Do shake. I saw the villain too, and knew
Him not! Oh how I long to be revenged!

Evander. Thy cause is mine! A soldier cries despatch
In every matter of emergency;—
Despatch will execute a plan to-day,
With feeble means, which, hazard till to-morrow,
And you may stamp despair upon its brow,
With twenty times the subsidy to boot.
A single hour of tardy leading on
Will damn the glory of a long campaign;
And all regrets, resolves, or quickened zeal,
Fail to retrieve the losses of delay.

Conlus. Delay! I scorn the word: no time like now!

Renzas. Delay to-day—to-morrow comes too late;
The opportunity is gone for ever.
To action, then, at once! and let us, with
The dawning day, unfold our enterprise.
Conlus! thy sole appearance will do more
Than hosts of allies—in thyself a host!

Evander. The name of Conlus, with a magic power,
Shall sound responsive from a nation's lips!
The soldiers will be foremost in the throng;
For I will take the veterans aside,
And lead them back to those auspicious days
When forth they marched to honour and renown,
Under the conduct of a well-loved King:
Then will I point them to the heir, and tell
The cruel fashion of his father's death.

Renzas. Forged in the glowing furnace of the soul,
And hammered on the anvil of the brain,
Good words and true, when aptly spoken, burn
With living ardour in the human breast,
To blaze anon in bright heroic deeds
That culminate in glorious victory!

Conlus. Fame leads us on—that fire of feverish heat
That glows so fiercely in the soul of youth;—
No rest now till the sword has done its work!

Evander. Honour and honesty, twin gems of worth,
Richly adorn the patriot's career,
And shed a sacred lustre on his deeds.

Renzas. Man lusts for power; and, when obtained, 'tis found
He oft abuses it for selfish ends:
He needs restraints imposed, and hindrances
To keep his steps in duty's righteous paths.

Evander. Be it our aim to work the public weal—
The King, and senators, and people too,
Alike amenable to laws supreme.

Renzas. War, like stern winter, has its gracious side,
In the economy of Nature's works;—
The snows, and frosts, and storms that rave so wild,
Are but the forerunners of cheerful spring,
And fit the earth for greater fruitfulness.
So war, with all its havoc and uproar,
But brings the nation to their pristine strength,
With terms of peace more lasting than before.
Man's love of country, in the honest heart
Needs but a spark to set his soul ablaze!
Some petty wrong will stir the patriot's blood,

And heaven and earth are moved to have redress!
Then how much more in such a cause as ours?

Evander. Oh it shall be a most transcendant morn!
But let's away, for night is wearing fast,
And much is to be done ere dawn of day. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

A Bed - Chamber.

LINDA AND ARELLA *seated, and about to retire to rest for the night.*

Linda. Thou hast heard fully of my enterprise—
Of our first meeting, his captivity
And subsequent release, and of my fear
To meet an angry father whose rash act
I thus have set at naught?

Arella. The whole details
Of this eventful day I thus have heard;
And thou, in turn, hast learned of me the love
Evander bears?

Linda. And thy strong love to him
So nigh a happy issue. Would my sire
Had more of kindliness of heart about him,
Though less of valour! It would go t'assuage
The rougher parts that shape his character,—
Yet he has ever proved benign to me.

Arella. Good heavens! forbid that ever a harsh word
Should pass my lips regarding him! Since youth
His counsel and protection have been mine.

Linda. Strange that a shade of melancholy should
At this quiet hour possess me—that the night

Of such a day should tinge my soul with sadness!

Arella. After great energy relapse ensues;—
'Tis always so.

Linda. Frail nature cannot bear
A high excited state,—it needs repose.
When woman loves, she loves with all her heart;—
I wonder if 'tis ever so with man!
He has so many duties to perform,
So much to occupy his busy life,
No lasting, vehement passion can be his;
But, lacking leisure to devote to it,
He scarcely can be said to love at all.

Arella. Oh! 'tis not so; and that thou'lt find ere long.
Duties may press and scarcely be fulfilled,—
Man's love to woman fires his glowing soul,
And still is with him in his daily work.

Linda. I wonder can he be a poor man's son,
And yet so full of gentle manliness?

Arella. The poor have many virtues, which the rich
Fail to acknowledge in their pride of heart;
They still protect the innocent and weak,
And with the lonely stranger share their crust.

Linda. We must not think that gentleness and love
Abide with us alone of noble birth,
Or those, like us, well nursed, well fed, well clothed,
With troops of friends and countless luxuries.
The wayside beggar, be she e'er so poor,
Or clad in garments coarse or wretched rags,
May own a soul as gentle, as refined—
And bearing fruits of truth and charity

As good and precious—as the stateliest dame
Or most exalted woman of the land!

Arella. Truths these, dear Linda! pure and charitable.
The strain and tension of thy o'erworked brain
Now clamour for the counterpart of rest.

Linda. I cannot tell why I am wishing it,—
But I should like to change my couch with thee,
Say for a night or two. Methinks thy couch
Looks to the rising sun, and I should feel
The hours less irksome.

Arella. Such a favour asked
Is forthwith granted—were it twenty times
The worth it is. Let's now to bed;—remember
Our lovers in our midnight orisons.

[LINDA retires into an inner Chamber.

Love fosters love. We may forgive—forget;
But it is difficult to love—our foes!
When man or woman truly is in love,
Its hidden depths of passion who can sound?
We cannot gauge its breadth by measuring line—
Its height is boundless as the skyey vault.
Oh I have much to bear! The villain Timon
Harsh name, indeed, but he deserves a worse—
Did all but mock me! Providence alone,
With kind interposition, sent a youth
To save mine honour—gallant, good young man!
Whoe'er thou art, may Heav'n reward the deed!
Save me, ye blessed Powers! from sire or son!

[ARELLA retires—in a little while

Re-enter LINDA.

Linda. All the night long I toss me to and fro,
And feel a shuddering horror creeping o'er me
Which sober reason lacks strength to dispel;
I woo me rest, but she will not be wooed,
And sleep has never once sealed up these eyes.
Ye guardian spirits of the midnight hour!
Hover around me, and disperse those thoughts
That harbour in the threshold of the gloom!
Protect me in each moment's changing fears!
Light! why dost shine upon these closing eyes?
If danger comes, thou lett'st him see to work
All his devices with a surer hand;
And where no danger is, thou shin'st in vain!
It is the eye of sin that dreads the dark;—
Yet shall I to my couch again, and try
To sleep my dark forebodings into morn.

[She puts out the light, and retires into the inner Chamber.]

Enter BRENNUS with a dagger.

Brennus. So far 'tis well;—this is the very chamber.
A few short moments, and Arella's spirit
Takes its swift flight into a world unknown!
Thus wickedness must labour in the dark,
For the day fears it; but the shades of night
Give courage to the erewhile faltering heart,—
At midnight's drearest hour the thief breaks in
And carries off the prize day had denied.
To-night I play the thief, and for a life—
The hour has come, and darkness lends her aid!

*[He enters the inner Chamber, and stabs LINDA instead of
ARELLA as he intended, and re-appears with the dagger
stained with blood.]*

Without a struggle! All ye blessed Gods,
That reign amid the dark abyss of night,
Smile on the deed and give me recompense;
For I have been the agent of your law
And kept the letter to a syllable!
Say, what is life? A dream—a fevered dream—
That passes through the sleeper's restless brain,
At which he starts distressed, and still sleeps on,
Perturbed and tossed till all is hushed in death.
She will sleep soundly now, and give no sign.
Now for the grave! The morning dawns anon;
Arella is a-missing from her bed—
Matter replete with dreadful mystery!
Thousands will ring alarum through the land,
And lamentation everywhere be heard;
The King will not be slow to show his grief,
But howl and weep as much as any one.
He will put melancholy on his cheek,
Sackcloth and ashes on his royal head,
And be the leader in the scene of woe!

[*Exit BRENNUS into the inner Chamber.*

SCENE IV.

The Pleasure Grounds of the Palace.

Enter EVANDER, CONLUS, AND RENZAS.

Evander. Had we not better wait till morning light,
And in the interval go to the camp,
And, by a simple narrative of facts,
Stir indignation in the soldiers' breasts?

Let but our standard and our right appear,
And thousands will come flocking to our aid—
Men that are silvered o'er with years will rise,
Inspired by patriotism's glowing zeal,
And fling the crutch away and seize the sword!

Conlus. But who comes here?

Renzas. Belike some miscreant—

A rude disturber of the night's repose,
Whose deeds of rapine prosper in the dark.

Evander. He wends this way—keep close and see him pass.

[*Enter BRENNUS bearing the dead body of LINDA; he stops
and lays it on the ground.*]

Brennus. Tumult on tumult crowds this busy scene,
Pressing the living daily to the tomb!
How easily the thread of life is cut!
Frail mortal, but the creature of an hour,
Falls in a moment, never more to rise!
Life is a comedy—a thing of naught—
Scarce worth the having to the noble mind;—
See, all its grand and high-blown pageantry
Droops, like the blossom wrested from its sap,
And makes an exit to this house of death!
The silent stillness of the dead, whom ne'er
The voice of sorrow or of joy disturbs,
Bedecks mortality itself with charms,
And lends a radiance even to the tomb!
How gladly could I lay me down to sleep
And wake no more, for I am tired of life,
Could I but know that I should wake no more!
There is the goad that spurs me on to live,

And keeps me beating on this stormy tract—
The dread uncertainty of what's beyond!
Shall I implore the Gods to succour me
And bring relief to my bewildered soul?
Heaven's light and love can dissipate the gloom
And cheer the suppliant in his sore distress.
Away! ye idle fancies of an hour!
Let low-born peasants kneel and say their prayers;—
The King disdains to use such humble arts
In forwarding his cherished purposes;
With heart as hardened as a bit of steel
He marches onward with unflinching step,
And brooks not to be stayed by Gods or men.
This deed accomplishes my dearest schemes
And there is happiness attending it.

*[He stoops down, and is about to put the dead body in a pit
which has been dug for it—CONLUS, RENZAS, and EVAN-
DER rush out upon him—he escapes in the dark.]*

Conlus. He has escaped! the gloom hath sheltered him!
Does he still in the blood of innocents
Riot and gorge his unrelenting maw?
Is there no pity in that iron heart
To cry give quarter, and forbid to fall
The axe uplifted o'er a helpless foe?

Evander. The time is now at hand to put an end
To these unbearable and wicked deeds.

Renzas. But this has ever been the way with him;
The country has been one continued scene
Of cutting down and rooting up. Wherever
His jealous eye could fasten on a man

That had the knowledge to discern his deeds,
And the ability to thwart his aim,
There did the sword of extirpation fall;—
Whole families of proud and noble blood
Are now without the shadow of a name!

Conlus. Such is the hideous murder of to-night—
A princely lady murdered in cold blood!

Evander. Oh, 'tis a melancholy thing indeed—
Enough to freeze the stoutest heart, to see
Cold-blooded butchery secure his prey!
The innocent sun shall bring this work to light!
Let us not tarry; deeds of dreadful note
Are on the wing and shriek aloud, Revenge!

[*Exeunt, bearing the dead body.*]

Re-enter BRENNUS with a sword.

Brennus. 'Tis desperation—either death or life!
What! all away? the mangled body too?
Ye friendly Fates were ever wont to smile!
Will ye at length turn traitors to your own?
There lacks me olden pith, or by this sword
I might have proved a terror to them all—
At least sustained the brunt of a repulse!
The body will be brought to public view,
And the mob's pity clamour for revenge;—
But 'tis no matter, he who did the deed
Escaped unknown, and, with a dauntless brow,
Shall hear the dismal tidings of her death;
Then will the outburst of his treacherous grief
Ring to the utmost corner of the land!
These iron talons will outstretch the while

To fix upon a fancied sacrifice—
Whose blood must wash away the foul offence,
And so the people's anger be appeased!
Brennus may be suspected by a few,
But none dare be so bold as utter it;
For I will breathe upon suspicion's face
And smother it before it can assail!
No carping throat dare moot hostility;—
Still shall I boldly govern, undismayed,
And alter failings to advantages!

[Scene closes.

SCENE V.

A Street.

Enter EVANDER, with Soldiers and Citizens.

Evander. We may not institute a civil war
For the redress of petty grievances
Or the enforcement of each claim of right.
'Tis a calamity, too serious far—
That, in its course, doth strike the homes, the hearths,
And all the dearest interests of men—
To risk for trivial cause; but when, as oft,
Every pacific measure has been tried,
And failed, to solve the question in dispute,
Where sacred principles lie deep and broad,
And rights of conscience trampled in the dust;
Or when, as now, a base usurper rules
With iron rod, and stains the land with blood,
Man cannot hesitate to rise in arms;—

It is his great and glorious privilege
To draw the sword for truth and liberty.
So be it now with you, my countrymen!

1st Cit. The people, as one man, cry out Revenge!

2d Cit. Let there be no mistake, the tyrant dies!

3d Cit. The rightful heir shall occupy the throne!

Evander. Keep thus united, and the realm is free!

[*Exeunt with a flourish.*]

SCENE VI.

Grounds near the Palace.

Enter BRENNUS.

Brennus. That thing on which man sets his yearning heart
Oft proves, when won, his life's most cankerous curse.
Ambition! airy phantom of the brain,
That promises but never satisfies,
How have I followed thee with stedfast zeal!
And though thou often did'st deny me ease,
And calm of soul, and quiet happiness,
Yet I have worshipped thee, and called thee God,
Above terrestrial or celestial things!
Am I to reap the harvest of my toil,
And be the envy of a wondering world,—
My throne encompassed with prosperity?
Or have my hopes been but a nightmare dream,—
The idle fancies of a heated brain,
Devoid of any reasonable end?
The times do now betoken such a fate,
For they are fraught with harsh adversity

And threaten me with ruin. Ye blessed Gods!
Have I attempted overmuch, and so
Wearied the else fond arm of Providence?

Enter 1st ATTENDANT.

Well, fellow! why with so demure a face?

1st Attendant. Princess Linda is a-missing from bed; and a report hath crept its way to the Palace that she has been found in the woods stiff and clotted with blood, just under the willow-tree at the end of the long walk.

Brennus. Where is Arella? Is she still alive?

1st Attendant. Arella left the Palace (as report goes) early in the morning, along with Evander and several strangers; so that none of us hath seen her since.

Brennus. Base varlet! get the matter more by rote;—

Go and inquire me out these same events;

And if thou comest with a lying mouth

An instant death shall be thy punishment! *[Exit ATTENDANT.]*

Arella! Linda! what can all this mean?

Impossible that Linda has been slain!—

The fellow has no motive to be false?

But can it be these iron hands at length

Are red in daughter's blood!—The cruel deed

Recoils on self!—There's matter in thy throat.

Enter 2d ATTENDANT.

2d Attendant. I am straight returned from the market-place, and oh! ye blessed Gods! what sights! thy daughter Linda wrapped up in a shroud, pale and lifeless! I heard a thousand voices shouting Timon! Timon! and Revenge! Revenge!—but could hear nothing distinctly; but, from all I learned, I fear that Timon also has been murdered. Evander and Arella were there, and will be here

anon, for they follow hard after, and with a mighty multitude of people.

Brennus. To arms! to arms! call forth my gallant troops!
Arouse my faithful warriors to arms! [Exit BRENNUS.]

Other Grounds near the Palace.

Enter EVANDER, CONLUS, RENZAS, AND CITIZENS.

Evander. The work is making way most gloriously!

Renzas. The people everywhere are on our side,
And buckle on their armour for the fight!

Conlus. Force still meets force; the day has not yet come—
Perhaps it may—perhaps it never will—
When law and reason, girt with sovereign might,
Shall every quarrel and claim of man adjust.
Till then, the sword must be the arbiter,
And he who wields it best the cause decide.

Evander. 'Tis time the nation had its own again;—
Rally around your youthful King, and win—
Alike prepared to conquer or to die!

Conlus. In a well-regulated monarchy,
The people is the source of law and power;
These centre in the King—by them he reigns,
Still subject to the law that made him King—
The nation's love the true divinity
That hedges him about and keeps him safe;
So long as they support him he is great,
And good, and powerful; no one dares gainsay
Or touch his person or authority;
He can make peace or war—do what he will;
'Tis for the people's weal he owns this power,
They truly love him, and would die for him;

Withdraw their love—as infant he is weak;
From them divorced—he totters on his throne!

Evander. Tempered with truth and liberty, the sword
Of patriot flashes as a meteor bright,
While, steadfast as the fixed star to the pole,
It clears the onward path to victory;—
Give me a thousand wearers of such swords,
And death-doomed tyrants topple from their thrones!
The patriot who in freedom's battle falls,
Like setting sun, descends to rest, but leaves
A wondrous trail of glories in his path,
And lives in memories of a thousand years!

Renzas. The indomitable courage of the few,
Whose stirring war-cry still is "Victory!"
Is more of value, in the battle-field,
Than the brute force of countless hordes, that fight
But lack the valour that commands success.

Conlus. With freedom, truth, and justice in the van,
Courage in flank, and rear will never fail!

Evander. Heaven plants their guardian angels round the brave!
No sword may strike them in the battle-field.
The faltering cowards are the men who fall,
Or swell the ignoble roll of captive bands.
Strike, while the soul is glowing at white heat,
And every blow will be a tyrant's death!

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter ARELLA.

Arella. Linda, sweet Linda, how I weep for thee!
Dearest companion of life's early day,
'Tis only now I learn how well I loved thee!
Much I shall miss thee! Thou wast all that's good—

Too good for this vile world of sin and death;—
Now thou art gone, and I am comfortless,
But for the hope of meeting thee again
In that bright world, where all good spirits dwell,
And fear nor grief, nor death for evermore!

[Exit.]

[Re-enter BRENNUS, and enter and exeunt in confusion
Soldiers, several Attendants, &c.]

Brennus. Oh I could weep, but that the hand of death
Has fallen so heavily upon my home!
The son and daughter butchered in one night,
And by myself! But this no time for tears.
Up and to arms! put on thy coat of mail,
And drive the steal of treason from thy breast!
And yet, I fear the contest will be keen,
Since that Evander, too, has joined the foe.
His influence with the troops is very great,
And he will use it all. Come now what will,—
Or death, or life, it matters not to me;—
As owl in desert, I am left alone!
Why stand and shiver on the river's brink,
And dash not boldly through the tumbling waves?
This is a thought that sometimes troubles me.
These many summers I have lived, indeed,
And been the lusty instrument of much;—
My day has been a day of pestilence
That spread a mildew 'mong my fellow-men;—
I catered for the worms to feed upon!
The winter of old age may freeze the blood,
Stiffen the joints, unnerve the stalwart arm,
And chill with ice the ardour of the soul—

Perhaps 'tis natural that it should be so.
I have expended me my strength, and now,
No more inclined to all my former deeds,
I do not value life—it is a clog
I fain would part with; yet I fain would keep,
And must keep, till I am revenged to death
On these disturbers of my aged rest.
Give me my sword, and harness me for war!
When danger frowns, I am myself again!
The vigour which I feel is unimpaired
By all the hazards of a fitful life.

Enter 2d ATTENDANT.

2d Attendant. Evander and the rest of them are here,
And at their heels a crowd of citizens,
Who shout God save the King! Conlus our King!

Brennus. The boy then lives! where was my wonted nerve
That faltered yesterday, when yet time was?
Suspicion should have brought forth death, ere yet
Renzas and he had trafficked with the people;—
The prison bars are broke, and he is free! [*Alarums heard.*]
Bid them come on, we are prepared for fight—
The veterans will but laugh at such raw troops,
And sweep them from the surface of the land!

Enter Soldiers of BRENNUS.

Magnanimous and gallant countrymen,
And fellow soldiers! the harsh din of war
Has summoned us to arms. A rebel flag
Is planted o'er the ashes of your sires,
And, drenched with kindred blood of sons and daughters,
Is waving to the breeze. Your liberties,

Your lives, your all are its imperious claims!
Ye whom, in other days 'mid tougher deeds,
This arm has ever led to victory,
Awake, and scatter the insulting throng!
Methinks I see you, fired with honest pride
And fiercest indignation, bursting forth
To somewhat more than mortal energies—
Scouring the plain, at every stride ye take
A sight of terror to the enemy!
Who are the injured and insulted? You!
Not me—but you they have contemned! On you
They pour the havoc of this civil broil!
But ye, most loyal and devoted brave,
This is to you a great and glorious work!
Rebellion, with its thousand ills, must fall,
And all the honour and the bliss be yours!

[A flourish. Exit BRENNUS with Troops, &c. Scene changes to
other Grounds near the Palace; enter CONLUS, EVANDER,
RENZAS, AND CELSUS, with Soldiers and Citizens, the
Royal Troops fleeing before them.]

Conlus. Thy warriors are bold and mettled men.

Evander. They have been victors o'er a fiercer foe.

Brennus himself is now among the ranks
Commending them to deeds of chivalry—
But all is insufficient to inspire.

[Exeunt.]

Enter BRENNUS.

Brennus. The number of the enemy is great!
Our ranks grow thin—there's treason everywhere!
The Fates who spun and wove my destiny
Thus far, and made the wheel of life revolve

To this same notch—do they now bid it stop
And make a solemn, wretched, direful end?
I have done many works in my short life—
Dark deeds of wickedness and treachery
Have blotted all the space I occupied,
To gratify a proud ambition's lust;
And do my fortunes in a twilight frown,
And curse me with these vile intestine broils?
The tiger rarely has been tamed by man—
I have heard lions roaring in my time
Unterrified, and bellowed back again,
Closed with the tiger, grappled with the bear,
Ranged through their forests, undismayed, alone;
And 'tis not likely that a civil strife
Will now with fear unnerve me! No, ye Gods!
My troops will sweep these traitors from the land!
I'm not so doubled down with grief or age,
But this strong arm can show its prowess still;
And should death come, I'll meet him as a king—
Not quitting life by act of suicide,
As the stern Roman won't in cheerless hour,
Forging a virtue from necessity,
But with my forehead frowning on the foe,
And to opponents dealing death for death!

Enter CONLUS.

Thou com'st unasked. 'Tis thus we meet again;—
The struggle now is one of life for life!
The raven wings of death o'ershadow me,
Hovering as if they fain would be my shroud.
Conlus. Go to, for I have sought thee through the field,

Fretful, alone, lest other arm than mine
Should claim the honour of thy death. I live
To tell thee that a murdered father's ghost
Cries out for vengeance! Art thou ripe for death?

Brennus. Rash youth, avaunt! knowest thou thy enemy
A devil's name should not alarm thee more;
For I have drunk more potions mixed with blood
Than e'er a citizen of hell has done;—
They call me ghastly Hecate's minister!

Conlus. Ay, but thou'lt be her minister no more!
For I will tear from thee thy royal robe
And tread it in the dust!

Brennus. It irks me much
That thou dar'st seek a monarch for thy spoil.

[*They fight; BRENNUS reels and falls.*]

Forbear!

Conlus. Blood-thirsty tyrant! do thy hellish deeds
Not freeze thy soul with an eternal dread?
The Gods have put the monster in my power
To test the force of generosity.
Rise and defend thyself! die like a man!
My father's ghost now shrieks—My death avenge!

BRENNUS rises.

Brennus. Or one or both beneath the sword must fall!

[*They fight again; BRENNUS is wounded, and falls.*]

Enter EVANDER, RENZAS, CELSUS, ARELLA, and a host of Citizens.

Evander. The spirit of the sire inspires the son.

Conlus. Friends, ye are come to see the tyrant die.

Arella. My brother and my virtue's life survives.

Brennus. The bands of death are still omnipotent.
Since that I hover o'er the utmost verge
Of the unseen, unknown futurity,
I could unfold me strangest incidents
Which reckless earth, in coming days, will bear
And be the fierce contested theatre!
I do behold me wars and armaments,
And revolutions, filling up the scene.
But what is this? My soul grows faint and cold:
I feel I know not what—a spell that binds
The dark recesses of the inner man.
Forced backwards still, and driven to life's edge,
I shrink and shudder at the fearful gulf,
The fathomless abyss—dark, yawning, wide—
That looms between me and the nether world!
And must the headlong plunge at last be made?
Renzas was false and faithless to his trust,—
Let not the furies suffer him to live! [Dies.]

Renzas. The tyrant has been slain; and liberty,
The brightest jewel in a sovereign's crown,
Begins its glorious and refulgent reign.

Evander. I greet thee now the victor of the field,
As well as monarch of this mighty realm;
The opposing troops no sooner knew our cause
Than they were hearty in promoting it.

[Over the dead body of BRENNUS.]

Conlus. Now art thou dead, thou monster of the earth!
The spheres were surely troubled at thy birth.
Thine was a life with wickedness replete;
Infernal were the glories of thy seat,—

Got by foul murder, and by blood sustained;
By these cursed instruments thou still hast reigned!
Revenge is satisfied, the realm is free—
The true predictions of the fatal three!
Evander and Arella's sacred love
Receives the sanction of the realms above.
Yet this bright day of honour and renown
Shines not without the darkness of a frown;—
Linda demands the tears of grief to flow.
Linda well merits all we can bestow,—
A monument of glory shall be reared
To her pure love and virtue. She appeared
A heaven-born spirit, for a moment given,
To bless mankind, and woo them up to heaven;—
Just seen and loved,—we met to vow and sever,
To meet no more on earth, but love for ever!

FINIS.

ALCANDER;
OR
LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP:
A DRAMA,
IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

MEN.

ALCANDER, *an Athenian Citizen.*

SEPTIMIUS, *a Roman Citizen.*

ISOCLES, }
DAMOCRATES, } *two Citizens of Athens.*

SOLON, *a Physician.*

LYDIAS, *Father to Lydia.*

PHILANDER.

SARGUS.

TELUCUS, *a Roman Tribune.*

PRIMUS, *a Roman Citizen.*

FURCUS.

VILUS.

A Judge of Athens.

*Two Officers of Justice; two Watchmen; Victors;
Banditti; Guards; Attendants; Slaves; &c.*

WOMEN.

LYDIA, *an Athenian Maid.*

PHILANDRA, *daughter of Philander.*

SCENE.—For the first three Acts at Athens; during the remainder of
the Play principally at Rome.

ALCANDER.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

Athens.

Enter ALCANDER AND SEPTIMIUS.

Alc. I had a dream last night.

Sept. The hectic flush

That glows upon thy cheek doth speak so much.—

What was the matter of it?

Alc. Crammed with incident,

And full of overwhelming frightful stuff;

No vague, irregular catastrophe,

Like mongrel dreams—composed of fits and starts,

And which the sleeper, when he wakes, forgets,—

But one unbroken chain of argument.

Sept. Oh for the blessedness of one in love!—

It is this feverish pulse of thine that beats

Doubly too quick, and, sleeping or awake,

Wraps thee in one absorbing reverie.

Alc. It was a vision of no common sort,

And much impressed me;—I would give the world

To have its mists unveiled.

Sept. Astrologers

Are in disgrace with me;—the vulgar creed

In death's alarums, prophecies, and signs

Shaping themselves to crude fantastic moulds
Upon the eye of sleep;—impossible!
There's no such unity of action here,
Where chance usurps the place of Providence.

Alc. I marvel not the Emperor of old,
Whose midnight visions were the harbingers
Of his own fate in after times, did call
The Magi and Chaldean soothsayers,
With all the learning of the Eastern clime,
To pacify his fears. I could the same.

Sept. Truly, thou'rt but a sickly paramour!
Is't possible a dream can plague thee so?
I could cohabit with old Pluto's self
All the night long, and, at the glimpse of morn,
Chase the black rogue with night, his shroud, away!

Alc. The visions of the night may tell the truth.

Sept. Well, let me hear this knavish dream of thine?

Alc. I stood upon a rugged precipice,
Whose top did mock the clouds;—on the one side
Of its deep shelving base, the angry surge
Fretted aloud and lashed the lusty rocks;—
Methought I gazed upon the scowling brine,
The wave on wave, until mine eyes grew dim
And a dull languor crept upon my soul.
The spirit of Septimius arose,
Much altered from its now terrestrial form—
Ghastly and pale—and, in its icy grasp,
A falchion gleamed; its eyes shot livid light;
The smile upon its cheek was horrible—
Fiercer than death! It came and stood before me,

And frowned upon me with the glare of hell!

Sept. Is this the way that friend in sleep meets friend?

Alc. My palsied frame did quiver, and the blood
Did curdle in my veins! It seized my throat
With energy, that made resistance vain,
Dragged me across the summit to the brink,
And tossed me headlong! From the topmost verge
Of that proud height I fell; yet still retained
The knowledge of my fate, and longed to die
But could not, till my footsteps touched the foam
Of the rough billows that did swill the mount,
When the same Spirit came and wafted me
Back to the region whence it threw me down,
Then vanished into ether. I awoke,—
It was a vision of the midnight hour!

Sept. A surly one; in truth, the telling now
Hath wanned thy ruddy cheek;—but let it pass.
What though the dream had carried thee through death,
And showed thee all the realm that lies beyond,
And magnified the horrors gendered there?
Truly, it were a vision after all.

Alc. We are but men, Septimius! and these sights,
To speak the least, if greater end be none,
Remind us still of our humanity.

Sept. Am not I here? and love not I my friend?—
The bugbear carries falsehood on its front.

Alc. Suppose not that I e'er mistrusted thee;—
Rather my fear these bodements were not good,
And threatened death or ruin to our love!
We both are young, and yet a dozen years,

With all their mellow influence, have been
The solder of our friendship. We have lived,
Each for the other's weal—a mutual bliss—
And, when a laurel decked one of our brows,—
Each bore the prize!

Sept. The Areopagus

Hath blazoned forth the conquests of our lore,—

Alc. And shall do so again; for, as I live,
The eloquence shall thrill with stronger chord
When I remember that its victories
Gladden the bosom of my friend at Rome!

Sept. This brings the colour to thy faded cheek;
And, now, let me remind thee of thy promise:—
Do'st thou remember wherefore we are met?

Alc. Oh yes, full well. My sketch of her runs thus:—
A beauteous flower that blooms on graceful stalk,
So delicate, that every breath of wind
Inclines it quiveringly to and fro,
Shedding delicious odours all around,
And yet so strong, that winter's surly blast
Struggles in vain to rob it of its pith,
Or to destroy its fragrant loveliness—
It waves majestically o'er the storm.

Sept. This is thy fancy's dream of her thou lovest?

Alc. And falls far short of the reality
Now fires my soul! She will be here anon!
An ecstasy of bliss,—as thou shalt tell.
But I myself, as I remember me
In former days, did fret to note a man
When love had fairly clutched him in his arms,—

So childish in his attitudes and words.
Then would he rave and laud her qualities,
And conjure up the bastard epithets
That poets picture. They have fix'd to meet.
She comes too late one minute by the clock;—
How deep the agony that stirs his soul!
He groans distracted; like an infant, pules
Quite inconsolable. This in a man
Endued with reason, did appear so vile,
That, with a studied application, I
Have kept, mayhap, as far the other way,—
And seemed too frigid! Is't not better thus?

Sept. Philosophy commends thee;—yet 'twere hard
To hear philosophy in such a case.

Alc. No, not a whit; let reason bear the palm,
Our passions never should have masterdom!
And yet I love her, as I love myself;
And would die for her!

Sept. Thou dost speak it well!
Earth has its beauties like the vault of heaven;
And women are the stars that sparkle there,
Whose light and loveliness relieve the gloom,
And fascinate and cheer the heart of man,
Which else were drear as night, and dull and dead!

Alc. Beauty in form and feature is a gift
Much coveted by man. The eye is caught,
And clears the way for love's ensnaring glance;
But there are needed other elements
To win the soul and keep it there entranced,
Brimful of pure and never-changing love—

Those sweet and truthful modesties of soul
Which peerless woman only can reflect!
Here lives a beauty that knows no decay,
Whose vigour strengthens with advancing years;
Its leaves ne'er wither 'neath the chill of age!
A woman's sceptre is her loveliness;
Her crown a round of virtuous modesty;—
When thus adorned she is omnipotent,
And man delights to kneel and be her slave!

Sept. The fount of love in woman's virgin heart
Pours forth a clear perennial stream of bliss
That he who tastes it ever longs to drink!
When lovely woman all her charms displays,
A film, mayhap, comes o'er the eyes of man,
Some witching glamour that his sight bedims!

Alc. Who says that love is blind? Love is not blind;
His eye and wit are lively to discern
All qualities of rare and precious worth
That in the object of his choice reside;
These may be faint to others, but to him
They blaze undimmed by shade of haziness!
And yet may love be blind, in this respect
That he will never see or speck or flaw
In the unrivalled diamond of his heart,—
Though visible to every eye beside!

Sept. Love at first sight oft stirs the human breast;—
The fire is kindled, and the living warmth
Burns bright and glowing all the after life;
Yet sometimes, though at first so full of heat,
The needed fuel is so scant and lean

The flame will shortly flicker and expire!

Alc. When at white-heat the glowing bosom burns,
'Tis easily welded to a kindred soul;—
Love begets love—it is a social power,
And frets to be alone,—as voice of friend
It claims the guerdon of companionship!
She is a diamond of the purest ray,
Dazzles mine eye, and captivates my heart!
Her presence, like the sun at mid-day, bright—
Her absence, as the starless midnight, dark!

Sept. I long to see her. I shall tell thee all
That I think of her.

Alc. Spare me not her faults.

Sept. I trust there's none.

Alc. To me, indeed, there's none;
But yet she has her faults. Who lives that can
Lift up his head and stand for innocence?
Unbare the purest bosom, and behold
Corruption has a germ engendered there!
A vestal's self is not immaculate.
Lo! where she comes—celestial as the light
That gently falls upon the breath of morn!

Enter LYDIA.

This is Septimius, my beloved friend;
Love him, and thereby prove thy love to me,
For we are one.

Lydia. Oft have I heard the name,
But now a closer union shall be ours,—

Sept. Which I shall cherish with a steady zeal,
Since thou'rt to be the consort of my friend.

Dam. Thou art indeed a many-sided man,—
Quick to devise, and rapid to perform.
I will.

Isoc. Come at sunset—
I'll keep the hour.

Vengeance is sweet to him who longs for it! [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

A Room at Athens.—SEPTIMIUS is lying on a Couch.

Enter ALCANDER AND SOLON.

Alc. This is my dream;—but yet, the latter part
Did set me on the precipice again.
The fever shall abate! Septimius,—
Dost not feel better?

Sept. I am nearly well.

Solon. Speak to him not; harass him not with question;
His pulse is fierce and rapid;—could he woo
One hour's sweet slumbers, all might yet be well.

Alc. Precious restorative! let's prove thy power,—
More potent far than all the boasted juices
That pharmacy applauds.

Sept. Stay, gentle friends,
Your presence and attentions give me peace.

Solon. That wandering eye needs rest.

Alc. Now lay thee down; the gentle breath of sleep
Will surely bring relief.—A short adieu! [Exeunt.

Scene changes to the Exterior of the House.

Enter SOLON AND ALCANDER.

Solon. It is a wild distemper, and defeats

Medical skill;—I never knew nor heard
Of such a case.

Alc. Is life at hazard?

Solon. Why, in good sooth,
The fever storms;—if it continue long,
I cannot vouch upon the issue of it.

Alc. But tell me, dost thou deem his life in peril?
Let me not hug a false security
That will but break upon me like a bolt
Of thunder, should it prove itself a liar.
Tell me the very worst, though it be death?

Solon. It were imprudent in me to conceal
My sworn conviction.

Alc. Is it come to this?
There is an antidote can force a cure
'Gainst fate itself;—it lieth with the Gods.
Can anything defy Omnipotence?
Hear me, ye gracious and eternal ones!
And aid the baffled skill of puny man;
Or, with an unseen arm, repel the plague
That preys upon him;—I implore the work
By all the mercies of your deities!
If that you value friendship's dearest growth,
And love to see it flourishing on earth,
I pray you heal him, and the flower shall be
Hereafter fairer, lovelier than before,
And more to be admired.

Solon. I have done all
That human skill can proffer; yet we find
Strong nature, oftentimes, left to herself,

To bear the alternate smiles and tears of life!
The cloudless sky of thy well-balanced mind
Shines bright and clear o'er mists and storms of earth.

Alc. The earth, the sea, the air, the universe,
All full of life and love! Life without love
Were death—a living death! Why then should man,
That perfect masterpiece of Nature's works,
With frozen throbless heart be cold and dead?
All men are brothers in a certain sense,
But more than brothers in the eye of Heaven;—
This well may lead to ardent charity.
Man dies and yet survives—the human race
Is one and indestructible! It lives,
And with revolving years eschews decay
Or death! Like chain of endless links,
It binds the world, and stretches through all time
Fastened, at both ends, to eternity!
Kingdoms may vanish—empires pass away—
Still man, in all his glory, fills the earth;—
The friendship hollow, and to be despised,
That in the hour of need withholds its aid,
And cannot make a willing sacrifice
To soothe and warm the bosom of a friend!
'Tis in the crucible the dross is severed
From the pure gold; 'tis then fire's test detects
And tells us whether friend be false or leal;—
No surer way to gauge man's constancy
Than when, o'erta'en by poverty or shame,
The lonely outcast silently appeals
For food, or shelter to his ancient friend.

Solon. He, the true hero of an hundred fights,
Who conquers self, and, with a loving heart
And spirit wrapped with deep humility,
Lives to shower blessings on his fellow-men,
Amid the turmoils of earth's checkered life,
Not stoical, but strong in sympathy,
Shares all the joys and sorrows of mankind,—
A marvellous type of true humanity!

Alc. The selfish man, when lust is satisfied,
Will hate the woman whom he swore to love,
And even take her life to hide his crime;—
A selfish man will push his friend i' the ditch,
And step upon him, so he saves himself;
Aye, he will guide him to the thickest wood,
And, on a sudden, leave him there to die,
Rather than cumber or annoy himself.
Let's in together, shrewdly to devise
How best the mean and end may harmonise.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.—SCENE I.

A Wood near Athens.

Enter ISOCLES AND DAMOCRATES.

Isoc. Night's curtain drops.

Dam. Would he were come!

Isoc. Art sure

That he would pass this way?

Dam. He seldom fails;—

But to make matters wholly opportune,
I bade a friend of mine beguile his steps
Upon the road.

Isoc. Now shall he perish by a woman's hand,
For she's the cause and is the criminal!
I could do murder for its stirring thrill;
But when the deed is portion of a plot
Big with high fame, it yields an ecstasy
More exquisite by far than common murder.
I dote upon the maid;—the work that now
Calls forth our energies secures her mine!

Dam. Let him sell out his frothy eloquence
With best adroitness,—it will not avail
In this encounter, scream he e'er so loud.

Isoc. After his death, I'll wreak my malice on him
By ripping up his entrails to the sun!
That heated blood which courses through his veins
Shall freeze as jelly in the winter's frost!
His body shall be dragged to some lone moor,
Exposed to all the mouldering damps of heaven,
Till that the ruttish disposition in him
Rot cold away, and his dismembered corse
Become more loathsome than a charnel-house!

Enter ALCANDER.

Alc. The earth is silent! silent is the sea!
The air, the clouds, and all the hosts of heaven,
Are wrapped in silence deep and mystical!
Yet speak they with a living voice to man,
In a constructive language of their own!
Suggestive Silence! mighty Emperor
Of thought and wisdom! let thine utterances,
Although unheard, be felt, and thrill the soul
With the exhaustless treasures of thy realm!

Sweet is the mellow odour of the eve,
When the dark mists cling closer to the earth,
And wrap the hill and dale in shade! Mark how
The deepening gloom calls out the starry hosts,
Erst by the light of day invisible,
And strews their myriad glories o'er the skies,
With heights and depths of magnitude sublime
And boundless as the universe itself!
'Tis then the soul, that living light in man,
Begins to burn with brighter flame, when left
To nature's dark and mystic solitudes!
Then man holds converse with the world of spirits,
And gets a peep, beyond the disk of time,
Of wondrous visions in eternity!

[ISOCLES AND DAMOCRATES *now rush upon him.*

Dam. Strike strongly, sure, and merciless, and plunge
The dagger in his breast! Well struck!—again!
Bravo!—again! Thou actest like a god. [ALCANDER *escapes.*

Isoc. Thou art a boy—a peevish prating boy;
Fling by thy rapier, or be more a man!
A poor pet lamb, dressed in a lion's hide!
And were it not that I have called thee friend,
I would avenge myself upon the word.
Gods! wherefore didst thou lag so far behind?

Dam. Thou art too hot. Never condemn a man
Till thou hast heard him in his own defence.
This is not wise.

Isoc. Thy drivelling maddens me!

Dam. Nay, hear me out. I stumbled in the dark;
But let us after him, and show him still

The prowess of our arms! Fret not so bold;—
Art thou not one?—and he is but another.

Isoc. I leaned upon a reed.

Dam. Be swift of foot,
As thou professedly art fleet in tongue,
And he is ours!

Isoc. Speed thou along with me!
Look to thy feet, and stumble not again,
And so renew thy shrivelled character.

[*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter ALCANDER.

Alc. Some rude disturbers of the common weal
Engaged in midnight brawl. Discretion, oft
Valour's best comrade, has my surety been,
And I have mercifully 'scaped with life!
The villains think they are unknown to me;

[*Picks up fallen sword.*]

But, aided by this sword, they shall be traced!
Not the sole coward he who when he sees
The foe advancing, turns his back and runs
Or skulks and hides. The miserable wretch
Who silent sits and hears his friend maligned
Or truth assailed, by slander's scornful lip,
Yet shrinks and hesitates to interfere,
When word or look from him could shield the right,
Stands forth a craven of the deepest dye!
It is from envy they assault me thus,—
Envy, that magnifies and then detracts,
Exaggerates, and still decries good deeds,
Inwardly praises yet disparages,
Visits our best endeavours with a sneer

And any trivial failure magnifies,
Falls like a mildew o'er the goodly tree,
And with its canker eats both leaf and branch
And leaves the trunk a naked skeleton,—
Envy, that dwarfs all great and noble deeds
To its own peddling littleness of soul!
Envy and Malice are like sire and son,
Linked in the bonds of sworn companionship;
The one still follows where the other leads,
While Jealousy is fretting at their side,
And at their heels base Slander kicks and grins!
The rancorous venom of an envious tongue
Will poison all the well-springs of our life!
The butterfly, with golden-powdered wing,
Loses its lustre not more speedily,
When touched, than woman's purity is dimmed
Beneath the withering breath of calumny!
The stain may be unreal, yet still 'tis there—
Slander can see it, and the soil enlarge,—
A life of virtue scarce restores the bloom!

[Scene closes.

SCENE II.*Athens.**Enter ISOCLES AND DAMOCRATES.**Isoc.* He has escaped!*Dam.* And damned our enterprise.*Isoc.* My sword dropped from my clutch; and in the dark
I failed to lay my hand on it again!
Well, 'tis no matter.

Dam. What a loss was there!—

Disarmed, you could do nothing in the fight.

Isoc. I'll buy another, without loss of time,
And see that it be made of sharpest steel—
One that can do some work when deftly used!

Dam. Thou hast given me occasion of offence,
And I shall quarrel with thee.

Isoc. Be it so;
But not till we have killed our enemy—
The common foe!

Dam. Let us be friends till then.

Isoc. Agreed; and after that, our union may
Go to the dogs, for aught I care for it.

Dam. Thou must not speak to me in such coarse vein;
I'll not endure it!

Isoc. Thou canst help thyself.
Let us be friends until we can afford
To quarrel with each other in true mood,
And measure sword with sword in hostile fight!

Dam. A bargain be it. Hear now what I say!
This orator of ours must be displaced,—
That's certain, and by any means we can!
He is a barrier 'tween the crowd and me
And my promotion!

Isoc. Yes, we'll cut him off!
Alcander is a man whom I despise
And hate most heartily;—that woman, whom
He so admires, shall yet be all my own!
Of that be sure;—nor day nor night I'll rest
Until my aim be thoroughly secured!

Dam. Did the man know us, think you?

Isoc. Nay, I care not.

There was no witness to our dark attack;
No vile insinuation can leak out
From this our misadventure in the woods;—
Soon we will hit upon some other plan.

Dam. Ere many days, to gain our purposes!

Isoc. When the strong will to any end is bent,
The way to work it out is ever found. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Room at Athens.—SEPTIMIUS is seen lying on a couch.

ALCANDER and LYDIA conversing near the door.

Alc. List to me, Lydia! 'Tis the only plan.

Lydia. I cannot think of it.

Alc. Our friend then dies.

Lydia. Why did the passion so enthrall his soul?

Alc. Do I then love thee less that I propose
To part with thee to save him from the tomb?
No; I shall still retain thee as my own,
For the mind's eye to cherish and admire,—
And never shall another fill thy place!

Lydia. Let me but think on't till to-morrow's sun?

Alc. I cry thee mercy! Pluck from out thy brain
The idol which thou hitherto hast worshipped,
And, in its stead, enthrone a nobler form,
Before whose shrine thou ever may'st adore!
Come, dearest Lydia! hie along with me,
And say I have thy voice in tendering it.

[*Exit with LYDIA, and in a little while re-enters.*

Alc. Septimius! arise upon that couch,
And tell me all thy heart; hide nothing from me—
Thy malady, and where its venom broods—
The havoc it has made, and how we can
Procure thee a sufficient remedy;
For I suspect, upon a vague report,
That there are stranger phantasies with thee
Than thou revealest even to thy friend.

Sept. Believe me, I feel well. It is a kind
Of melancholy that has seized my soul;
And all the juices of the earth or air
Cannot remove it. Still it lodges here—
Tortures by day, and terrifies by night.

Alc. But hast thou never dreamed upon a charm
That may dispel it? I have wept for thee;
And as I saw the paleness of disease
Eating a daily canker o'er thy frame,
I laboured hard to find a fitting cure,—
And, like a practical philosopher,
I rob myself of the sole pearl I had
To save my friend. I would not wed her now
Were the wide universe to urge me to it!

Sept. Why wilt thou force me to acknowledge what
I dared not cherish even to myself,
Much less have whispered it to mortal ear?
I saw the maid—a fatal sight, indeed,
For it undid my health and happiness,
I looked upon her with admiring eyes—
Happy that she was destined to be thine!
Self had no place; it never dared to enter;

And yet I sickened, and I knew not why.
When thou didst talk of her, I was in pain;
When thou didst laud her gifts, it made me mad!
I chid myself, and strove to banish her;
Wished I could loathe her;—still the form was there,
And haunted me, immortal as herself!

Alc. What makes the current of existence run
Smooth o'er its pebbled bed, enchanting all
The walks of man, beside whose haunts it weeps,
Down to the mighty flood? Society,
And friendship, its promoter and reward.
Why should the bosom of ignoble man
Be centred so in self,—that all his aims,
Ends, views, desires, resolve themselves to this?
Cannot he act the god, and nobly climb
The lofty tree of generosity,
And from its summit pluck the golden fruit
That fellow-mortals set their eyes upon,
And fling it to the longing crowd beneath?
Lydia is mine;—and well I love the maid.
My friend lies sick and dying;—there is put
A cup into my hands that holds his cure;
And though I love it, and this bosom yearns
To drink the genial nectar it contains,
I set the goblet down, and give it thee;—
And is there any sacrifice too great
When such is the reward? Arise! and live,
And thank the gods thou hast at least one friend!

Sept. This spirit is from Heaven! Thy path has been
Amid the shining regions of the skies,

Where thou hast caught the pure ethereal flame
That now inspires thee! But believe it not
(Though death should be the dread alternative)
That I will thus abuse thy holy zeal.
No; let me perish rather,—as I do!

Alc. This is the raving of the lunatic,
Athwart whose soul the changes of the moon
Have spread their sallow influence! Be wise.

Sept. Think not I am so fraught with selfishness.

Alc. Thy friend himself is the apologist.
'Tis selfishness of mine that bids thee live;
I'll hear no more; the verdict has been sealed,
And she is thine,—the lovely maid is thine!
Think upon that, and speedily be well. [Scene closes.

SCENE IV.

Athens.

Enter ISOCLES AND DAMOCRATES.

Isoc. These are strange days! The world is getting old,
And falling into dotage! Time has been
When man would peril all his treasures
Upon a woman's smile, and deem himself
By much the gainer;—so he won the maid!
But now he acts the sage philosopher,
And coolly calculates the pro. and con.,
And, all sagacious of his neighbour's weal,
Heeds not his own!

Dam. I tell thee what,—he has
Acted this part to please the populace,

And shrewdly thinks so generous a deed
Will argue in his favour;—seated on
The pinnacle of popular applause,
He scorns the vile essays of common souls
To woo esteem;—no traveller he upon
The beaten road of praised integrity,—
He reaches forth to grasp at heights beyond,
And having gained them, sets the world at bay!

Isoc. Methinks that he has missed the mark for once.
He has been treading over slippery ground,
And so shall tumble on the first false step;
This step is taken—let us be alert
To plunge our victim deeper in the mire!

Dam. I understand not yet thy enterprise.

Isoc. Indeed! 'Tis certain, though he had resolved
To snare himself, he could not else devise
A plot so capable. This beggar, Fame—
Pursued too eagerly—doth often curse
Her foolish votaries, and leave them friendless,
Even in the moment of their utmost need!

Dam. But let me first be master of the schême,
Before I be partaker of the gain
That seems to greet thee.

Isoc. Hold! The best rub is
That he himself has set the fitful trap!
Art thou so dull? He ever loved the girl—
Wooded and betrothed her;—then, in one short hour,
He makes the bargain with a Foreigner,
And sells her for a slave, without consent
Or freedom asked.

Dam. I do bethink thy plot,
And hug thee for it! When the bride hath left
Her native city (for report assumes
That she does leave for Rome immediately),
Then shall our specious libel be held forth,
And proud Alcander's subtlest eloquence
Will but be heard—the prelude to his fall!

Isoc. I shall inflame my fellow-citizens
By 'listing all the women on our side—
The surest inlet to the soul of man!
Then shall I tell them how the match arose,
And how defeated! If the Book of Fate
Fight not upon his life, he cannot stand—
To palter with a fair Athenian dame,
And sell her to a Roman citizen!
The jewel he has sold must be redeemed,
But, meanwhile, bring destruction on his head!

Dam. Had we not better, in the interim,
Devise and legally arrange our plans?

Isoc. Assuredly. Then wilt thou to my closet?

Dam. Lead on;—I'll follow.

Isoc. Nay, let's trudge together—
The sturdy yoke-mates of a bold design.

Dam. So shall I be revenged on him at last!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

Athens.

Enter ALCANDER, SEPTIMIUS, AND LYDIA.

Alc. Take her, and love her,—call her all thine own!
And, if at any future hour, there brood

A cloud upon thy soul, that hinders thee
From seeing her as beautiful as ever,—
Or, with the hot-brained passions of the world,
A storm of wrath is gathering in thy breast,—
Or, tired with occupancy, thou dost long
To shift the music thou hast loved so well,
Yearning for something novel,—I adjure thee
Think upon me;—thou'lt be thyself again!
Oh 'tis a dreadful thing, to own a wife
Whose every look and word and deed thou watchest,
And fearest that she is playing false to thee!
When fangs of jealousy have stung a man,
Surprised, confounded, and struck dumb he writhes;
And when he thinks on what he was and is,—
The late love lost, dishonour base sustained,—
Frantic with rage, he burns with fierce desire
To wreak due vengeance on the criminal!
Forbear! his wife is purer than the snow,
Although his jaundiced eye her virtue taints!
Ne'er let thy bosom harbour jealousy;
It is a raging and consuming fire,
Will burn up all thy heart's best sympathies,
And in their stead put all the pains of hell!

Sept. Enough, enough! I owe this life to thee;
And, therefore, hear thy counsel as from Heaven.
Lydia! repeat thy friend Alcander's name,
And that shall still restore me to myself!
The heart-sore grudge is,—that I dared to love,
Which yet I dared not! I have robbed thee of
The choicest flower that bloomed upon the earth,—

And left a dreary wilderness behind!

Lydia. Truly, in this I know not what to do.
I love them both; but still my heart doth tell
Alcander was my first, my only choice!

[*Aside.*

Sept. It fails me to express, by words or signs,
The strong emotions swelling in my heart
Towards thee, and all that thou hast done for me!

Alc. No more of this! Man was not formed for self,
But to complete the universal plan
That everywhere cries out there is a God!

Lydia. As oft I wish Alcander had been mine,
So oft Septimius' ghost presents itself,
And frights the fond delusion from my mind!

[*Aside.*

Sept. Why, Lydia, dost thou look so pale and sad?

Alc. Be merry, girl; Septimius is thine!

Lydia. In sooth, I am not sad; and I am sad;—
The change of situation makes me dull
But yesterday I was a heedless girl!
The duties I am come to bid me think
How best I may discharge them faithfully.

Alc. Remember, lady, 'tis thy wedding day!
Therefore be merry;—I, at other times
Not much in love with mirth, rejoice apace;—
Woman ne'er owns more grace or dignity
Than when on duty, at her husband's side,
She reigns his honoured guide and comforter!

Sept. In his wife's honour man exalts himself;
And though her slave, the husband still is king!
But tell me this, Alcander! why dost not
Make up thy mind to go with us to Rome?

No entertainment shall be lacking there.
Be thou a Roman,—leave the shores of Greece,
And be a freeman citizen of Rome!

Alc. Rome has no charms for me till thou be'st there!
Then shall my orisons invoke its weal;
Nor shall my visits be too widely strewn.
But Athens is the city of my birth,—
The spirits of my fathers wander here!
Here, too, the sprightly germ of eloquence
Is nurtured by the genial showers of heaven,
And rises to perfection! Thou and I
Have oftimes strayed among its sacred fanes,
And our fond spirits waked to ecstasy;
For deeds of bygone years had stamped the ground
Sacred! One scarce can wander here, and fail
To catch the fervour of the olden times.

Lydia. Indulge us, so that thou wilt go with us?

Alc. A little bitter mingles with the sweet,
Else earth were earth no longer;—we must part.

Sept. A greenish melancholy creeps upon
The soul at parting from the friend it loves,
Almost like death itself!

Alc. Muse not upon it;—
The duties of the world do call you hence.
Go, and be blessed! Write full and frequent to me;
And let not distance bar our intercourse.

Sept. Let us live in thy mind.

Lydia. Ever kind soul!

Sept. Off now to ship!

Alc. I'll see you safe aboard—

Then take my station on the lonely shore,
And mark the pennons till the eyesight fails;—
And should we never meet again below,
May we embrace, where friends shall never part,—
In the Elysian fields of yonder skies!

ACT III.—SCENE I.

Athens.—the Areopagus.

*Enter JUDGE, LYDIAS, ISOCLES, DEMOCRATES, and Attendants,
with ALCANDER as a Prisoner.*

Judge. Bring forth the prisoner; and lead the proof.
The misdemeanour thou art charged withal,
Is one of high and serious degree—
Even selling for a slave a maid of Athens;—
For which offence the punishment is death.

Lydias. And such a punishment he merits well!
I had a daughter whom the culprit loved—
Doted upon, with all the apparent zeal
Of fond affection;—I denied him not.

Judge. Indulge thy tears, old man, thy case is hard.

Lydias. She was betrothed,—the bridal day was fixed;—
Alas! a sudden qualm came o'er his soul,
Too covetous of gold;—he wooed, he won,
And sold my only daughter for a slave!
The Roman purchaser hath safely fled,
Bearing the prize; and I, her father, weep!

Judge. A piteous tale. Hast any more to add?

Lydias. Can there be more or heavier than this?

Judge. Doth any man bear witness to the fact?

ISOCLES comes forward.

Good Isocles! I charge thee, speak the truth!

Alc. But I have much to urge against this witness,—
If I must die, let me at least have justice!

Judge. What says the prisoner?

Alc. I have much to urge
Against the witness who has now appeared.
A plot was laid, not many moons ago,
By him and one 'yclept Damocrates,
Aimed at my life! They both assaulted me!

Judge. Canst thou bring any evidence to this?

Alc. My strongest proof is that my arms were hacked,
And that I wrenched this weapon from the foe;
But as the night was dark it sheltered them
While it did favour me. I struggled hard
To beat them off; at length was saved by flight.

Judge. This statement cannot be received in Court.
For evidence thou givest us calumny—
Therefore proceed; the witness must be heard!

Alc. My Lord!

Judge. I'll hear no more.

Alc. My Lord!

Judge. Proceed.

Isoc. It was my happy fate to know the maid—
The beautiful, the smiling Lydia;
And often at her father's house, as still
My occupation led me thitherwards,
Have I beheld Alcander wooing her.
His vows were strong and frequent;—to myself
Has he protested long and ardent love

The popular voice, though very often right,
Is not infallible. There is a power
More potent far than that the people wear;
It dwells within, and tells us right and wrong—
Conscience! that mighty sovereign of the heart,
When it approves, be sure to follow it,
If the whole world were on the other side!
With virtue and religion as his guides,
Man's inward monitor ne'er leads astray,
But always loves the true and beautiful!
Mysterious are the ways of Providence!
Its various parts seem oft at enmity
To narrow-sighted man. He fixes on
A little speck of the extended sphere,
And, dreaming not that there is light beyond,
Which this dark cloud tends but to beautify,
Condemns the whole, and, like a peevish child,
Frets at the things he cannot comprehend!

Enter BANDITTI.

1st Robber. The man is ours.

2d Robber. Thy purse, or death!

Alc. Art poor,

And therefore prowls't upon the highway? Sirs,

I tell you I have gold; but fight for it,—

My blood the channel that will let it pass!

*[They fight; ALCANDER is overpowered, disarmed,
and carried away.]*

SCENE IV.

Athens—A Street.

Enter TWO OFFICERS OF JUSTICE.

1st Offi. He went this way.

2d Offi. We can't be far behind.

1st Offi. It is a horrid deed of butchery!

2d Offi. I understand that he is near of kin,
And should have been the last to lift the knife.

1st Offi. Let's lose no time to make the villain ours;
The price upon his head is worth the pains!

2d Offi. Watch thou the right, and I shall scour the left.

[Exeunt severally.]

Enter ISOCLES.

Isoc. The reptile's at my heels! I am not safe,
So hotly followed. How could I divine
The trick would be discovered at this hour?
No sooner had I let the miser bleed,
And pursed a little of that filthy trash
For which the deed was done, there came, anon,
Some recreant night-adventurer, like myself—
Shouted alarm (accursed be his throat!)—
And forced me to secure, by speedy flight,
That safety which a longer stay had damned!
Now justice has me almost in her clutch;
At least has stamped me, henceforth—wanderer!
I weary of the ways of common life,
And court adventure; yet 'tis mystical
Why bad luck still attends me, and my steps
Are ever in the mire of wretchedness!
What reck I for the city of my birth?

It was an accident that made him slave!
Slave though he be, he has enslaved my heart!
A father dear again can set him free—
Be it my aim to have this quickly done!

[Scene closes.

ACT IV.—SCENE II.

Greece.—A Forest.

Enter ALCANDER.

Alc. Still let me breathe the air of liberty!
It is the native atmosphere of man—
The boon of Heaven, bestowed on him at birth.
Away, thou cursed shrew! that, with an arm
Of pestilential death, has fastened on
The goodliest region of the world, and bared it—
Blasting mankind with thy malignant scourge!
Rather I hail the desert's barren wastes,
Its scanty pittance, and o'erwhelming dangers,
Lost in the mazes of its pathless wilds,
Than hug the bondman's adamantine chain,
Though gilded by a freeman's luxuries!
Philander, true it is, was generous,
And by a nature of real tenderness
Did win the heart. Affection's word and look
Courted that homage which the lash could challenge,
And which, with many masters, is the bane
That alienates the bosom of the slave.
The yoke of bondage thus less heavily
Might gall the shoulder;—still it was a yoke—
An iron yoke, that lacerated sore,

Too grievous to be borne by flesh and blood,
Therefore I doffed it, reckless of my lot
And scorning all the storms of flood and field.
The soul of man recoils from slavery
And shrieks for help;—I madden at it more
That I have tasted of its bitterness,
And welcome freedom with a tenfold zeal
Since I have known the sorrow of its loss.
And yet life's paths are strewn with beauteous flowers,
Unheeded by the simple passers-by,
But which the poet never fails to pluck
And weave in chaplets of celestial grace,
That every eye may see their loveliness.
Dearest Philandra! I have left thee too!
Sun of the home and light of my dark days!
Thou little knew'st how this enraptured soul
Struggled 'twixt love and duty! Honour said
A slave must not abuse his master's trust,
Nor woo the lovely daughter of the house;
Equals should wed with equals, as a rule,—
And that may come in course, perhaps is near,
When heart may freely beat response to heart:
Meanwhile I hungered, and yet gave no sign!
The star that shines still leads my steps to Rome,
And I shall follow though the way be rough.

[Exit.]

SCENE III.

*Rome.—A Street.**Enter ISOCLES, FURCUS, AND VILUS.*

Isoc. Well, my bold friends! this life of ours is full of motley merriment and painstaking.

Furc. 'Tis a parti-coloured life, and full of whims and changes as a maid before marriage.

Isoc. And I think it be as full of mishaps and misfortunes, not simply as a maid before marriage, but as a pair of hopeful ones after the Gordian knot has been tied.

Vilus. And the long chain rivetted. Ha! said I not well?

Isoc. But then a goodly filch heals the wound and reconciles us to our fate.

Furc. What although we be taken in the act of stealing once and again?—the temptation is so irresistible that we return to the employment with increased energy.

Isoc. We carry itching palms; 'tis like lechery—never satisfied!

Furc. But good, my masters! if this thing hold it will make us all; 'twill stand the first job in the last century!

Vilus. I am bent it shall hold.

Isoc. It cannot otherwise than hold, if the parts are well and firmly put together. Keep to it as proposed, and we are as certain of the old fellow's monies as if they were already in our possession.

Furc. Curse the wholesome moonshine!—'tis like day!

Vilus. Foul weather and a cloud are our regular petitions.

Isoc. Cover awhile—he comes apace. I hear the tread of feet; lads, do your duty!

[*Exhibiting a wax impression of a key.*]

Isoc. Not all the world his treasures can secure

Out of our clutch;—we have the mould, and so
Can forge its likeness. You both managed well.

Vilus. The recreant showed a vein for sympathy.

Isoc. And we shall sympathise with him again!

Furc. This honest shift has thus accomplished
What the sore labour of these many months
Failed to procure.

Vilus. That lock has cost more pains
Than all the plans which I have ever laid.

Isoc. Applaud me for the fashion of the scheme!
And doth not industry prevail at last?
We'll have the key to reach the old man's gold,
And shall employ it when 'tis hardly cold.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

*Rome.—The Forum.—*SEPTIMIUS upon the Tribune's chair, attended
by Lictors.

Enter ALCANDER.

Sept. The Roman usage hath confirmed it good
And legal bearing. I can hear no more.
Parties have been abundantly prolix,
And I have given judgment carefully.

[SEPTIMIUS reads parchments.

1st Lic. Fellow, stand back!

Alc. I crave an audience.

1st Lic. You can't be heard.

Alc. My claims are of no common kind.

1st Lic. So are the claims of every suppliant.

Alc. Let me approach; I must and will be heard.

1st Lic. Dost thou insult a lictor in his duty?

[Strikes him with the end of the axe.]

That for thy insolence!

Alc. Lictor! thou wott'st not

Whom thou assailest with thy fearful axe.

1st Lic. And reck not, fellow!

Sept. Lictors! do your duty,

And keep the pressing throng more orderly.

Alc. A gold or silver coin might pave the way,

And bring me to his presence;—I have none!

And if I had, would it be well to use it?

Too often 'tis employed for vile intents—

Even to pervert the judgment-seat itself,

Not merely bribe its petty officer!

Who lives that does not feel the power of gold?

Gold honestly obtained and rightly used

Ennobles the possessor—blesses him

And all his friends and neighbours;—when misused,

A greater curse does not afflict the earth!

It helps to dwarf the widow's heart-felt loss,

Mayhap to warm her lonely couch, to think

Herself and children not left penniless;

It oft will dry the tears that true love sheds,

Deserted by the lover; it can bribe

To ape that love the heart alone can give;

Man makes a slave of man for lust of gold;

In sacred things, it purchases the priest,

Who grants an absolution to ill-doers;

For clutch of gold the miser fasts and dwines,

Grudges both clothes and hovel—sells his soul!

The sight of gold doth so inflame the eyes
Of dwellers in the city's lanes and courts,
That he who owns it may not venture there;
His gold is seized—and eke, mayhap, his life,
Should he but struggle to retain his purse!
Virtue succumbs before its potent sway;
It overlays and gilds the haunts of vice;
Many a foul deformity it hides,
Whilst it can blacken innocence itself!
The idol avarice takes many shapes:—
Not he the only avaricious man
Who hoards his gold, and stores his corn and beeves,
Annexing house to house and land to land,
And deaf to every call of charity;—
But he who, e'er so poor, so longs for wealth
That it becomes chief end of his desires,
While earning bread by daily sweat of brow,
Grudges and frets in that he is not rich;
And when he sees a fellow-workman earn
More wages than himself, is big with spleen,
Murmurs and jibes, and full of envy chafes,
Is one of its most servile worshippers!

Sept. Parties are heard; the sun has far gone down;
Now let the business of the court be closed!

1st Lic. Septimius nobly fills the Tribune's chair;
The laurels he has won sit well on him.

[*Exit SEPTIMIUS, attended by Lictors.*

Alc. Thus poverty is treated with reproach!
I barely can excuse my Roman friend.
Wearied and way-worn have I lingered here,

About the public Forum, all day long;
And hitherto my suit has been in vain!
First, I intended that I would at once
Force through the crowd, and seat me by his side;—
The attendant lictors, big with puny power,
Made that impossible! To catch his eye
Was next my aim; and not unfrequently
His eyes confronted mine. I motioned him,
Once and again; and still he knew me not,
Or seemed at least! Methought I could detect
The crimson flush upon his conscious cheek,
As if half-willing to retract his purpose,
And welcome me despite of his resolves!
My forehead has endured the winter's storm
And summer's heat since we were reckoned friends;
But yet, I still supposed that such a friend
As I had been, would live upon his mind
Too deeply chiselled e'er to be effaced.
The common spirit of man is selfishness!
Is my dear friend to lose his character
And fill his bosom with ingratitude?
No; I do wrong him; he must yet be proved!
In Rome, a stranger, whither shall I bend
These wearied limbs?—no house, no purse, no friend,
No bread to satisfy the wants of nature!
I feel a sort of loathing of existence,
And almost wish this night might be my last;—
I will go seek the caverns of the rock!

[Exit.]

—

SCENE V.

*Rome.**Enter SEPTIMIUS AND LYDIA.*

Sept. I tell thee, love! 'tis somewhat wonderful,
That he who was my bosom-mate so long,
And blessed me with the richest of earth's boons,
Should have neglected us so sadly now.

Lydia. My marvel really is not less than thine.

Sept. Six letters have I written him of late,
To none of which he has as yet replied!

Lydia. It is impossible that all is well,
For he is not the man to quit his friends—
He has a noble heart.

Sept. A godlike heart!
There's not another man beneath the sun
Can match him in the largeness of his soul!

Lydia. Well does he merit thy unbounded love;—
He used to prate of nothing else but thee;
And thou art never tired in lauding him

Sept. My resolution is to know the fact.
Soon as this Tribuneship is at an end
I'll visit Athens;—I do like it well—
Doubly endeared because it was thy home;
And there the good Alcander was my friend—
My more than brother!

Lydia. I shall go with thee;—
Nothing could yield me greater bliss than this!
I love the friend; and yet, in loving him,
Abate not in affection towards thee.

Sept. 'Twere cruel in thee not to dote on him;
And worse than cruel in Septimius
To wish it otherwise! The more thou lovest him,
The more shall I conceive thou dotest on me.
Can I forget that he bestowed the boon,
And risked his own existence to save mine?

Lydia. Would that this weary Tribuneship were o'er!
But let it be thy aim to make life sweet
By social duties;—the fatigues of office
Are best relieved by pleasures cropped at home
Within the private circle.

Sept. Rightly judged;—
Absence from home but makes the home more dear;
The sweetest flowers are gathered from the hearth.

Lydia. Let it be fixed, then, that we visit Athens,
And on an early day.

Sept. Soon as time lets;
And it is hoped the day will not be far.

SCENE VI.

Rome.—The Tombs.

Enter ALCANDER.

Alc. I have beseeched for shelter, but in vain!
Protection still refused! My fellow-men
Avoid me as they would a pestilence!
The most abhorrent creature upon earth
Consorts with others of a kindred nature;
But as for me, I am without a fellow
To cheer me in these woful wanderings!
Still, like a hated and unseemly ghost,

The solitary silence of the tombs
Affords that sympathy which man denies!
If this inhospitable world were all
The soul of man could fix on, Providence
Might be upbraided with capricious hands
In the bestowment of his benefits!
I may have done much evil in my time;
And yet, perhaps, and 'tis no jest, there are
Living in luxury and easy quiet
Men who have played the sottish debauchee,
Or earned their splendours by the knife of death;
To cope with whom, in hellish wickedness,
The very devil needs to strain himself!
But who hies here? One of the motley group
Of miserable wretches, like myself.
There passed the shadow of a female form,
Belike an outcast woman of the town,
Reduced to kennel here in wretchedness!
Poor wretch! she may have been as innocent,
In early life, as the fresh blush of spring,
And happy as the bird that woos its breath,
Till some seducer crossed her path, and by
His hellish arts succeeded in his aims.
She fell; was left; and ever since has fallen;—
Most culpable in that she never strove
To rise above her state of infamy!
I dreamed my lot was wretchedness till now;
And lo! it is outparagoned by this!
A troubled conscience is a frightful plague
To him who still inclines to evil deeds,

And pauses oft, and thinks, and hesitates.
Is it not well that conscience still approves
The tenor of my deeds? I suffer much;
But cannot fling the gauntlet at myself.
Patience, kind soul! thy hell may yet be heaven;
Thou little reck'st the weal that lies in store.
Here shall I deftly stretch my shivering limbs,
And court the envied nothingness of sleep.

[*He lies down and falls asleep.*]

Enter ISOCLES, FURCUS, AND VILUS carrying booty.

Isoc. All safely won;—the trick was nobly played.

Furc. Do you not know that I felled the old man in the hall?

Vilus. No; but so much the more complete is the deed. He cannot then pursue us, and we are out of danger.

Furc. Let us to the business.

Isoc. Three shares. I shall apportion them, and then we cast lots about the first and second choosings.

[*He divides the booty into three shares; they part lots;*

FURCUS has the last choice.

Furc. But I have set my soul upon that tankard;—the chasing of it pleases me. Still have I kept a longing for it since Amantha served the fellow;—many a night was his health pledged with it below stairs.

Vilus. The die is cast. You had your fair and proper chance; and since it falls to my lot, I shan't part with it!

Furc. Nay, but I must have it; were I to give up all the rest, the tankard shall be mine! I promised it to Amantha.

Vilus. Did you promise that mug? It shall not be exchanged, sirrah!—no, though it were to save your neck from the block! There's no friendship in bargain-making.

Isoc. Hush, good souls! bawl not so loud. You seem like fisherwomen in your quarrels.

Furc. The gauntlet's down, and I will fight for it!

[*They draw; FURCUS stabs VILUS.*]

Isoc. Gentlemen, put up your swords. I hear the noise of voices—will you not be wise? What! have you slain him?

[*Alarums heard; ISOCLES and FURCUS decamp, leaving a considerable part of the plunder.*]

Enter several Watchmen.

1st Watch. Murder and stolen property! He is as dead as the fish that was caught yesterday!

2d Watch. And here's a fellow lurking snugly in the corner, and sleeping too!

1st Watch. Ay, ay, the rogue is too sly for us. Up knave!

[*Striking ALCANDER with a staff; he starts up.*]

1st Watch. This is a sturdy fellow.

Alc. Are ye two spirits of the world beyond,
That thus disturb the silence of the tomb?
Or do ye traffic among dead men's bones,
And nightly visit these uncouth abodes
To earn a vile and wretched livelihood?
What is your errand? be it weal or woe?

1st Watch. A whoreson knave! he means to terrify us with his gibberish. Our errand, sir?—that you shall learn shortly. Come along with us, sir; and we shall inform you of our errand, when you shall be forced to answer for yourself before your betters.

2d Watch. Up, sir; up and trudge!

Alc. I take them to be men at all events.
If this is Roman courtesy at Rome,

Then I am sick o't. But one day arrived,
To be the dupe of such vicissitudes!
I grow a-weary of this petty world!
Why do we live?—and living, wherefore die?
Our life and death alike are mysteries—
Vexed mysteries, which reason fails to solve.
This earth is one unvarying round of life
And death;—all herbs, plants, trees, and animals,
With man, who proudly vaunts to be their lord,
A little while hold revel in life's halls,
And go to rest in death; and everywhere
Is death the child and parent still of life;
Life emanates unceasingly from death,
Each in its turn the offspring and the germ;
Fresh groups are ever putting on new forms,
To fill the haunts of those that disappear;—
Thus life and death pervade the universe!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.—SCENE I.*Rome.—A Street.**Enter ISOCLES.*

Isoc. Now, by the gods! the man is mine at last!
Kind Providence seems working on my side!
Shall I, then, shun the 'vantage she affords
To hurl destruction on his hated head?
Throw pity to the winds! be merciless!
Rekindle in thy soul its ancient grudge;
So shall it stir thee up to dire revenge
That only will be satisfied with death!

They found him in the tombs—so far, 'tis well;
 Good Fate would have it so that he was there.
 Vilus was lying freshly in his blood;—
 He is the murderer; and what more clear
 Than that the booty which lay strewn around
 Is the rich treasure of the Senator!
 And wilt thou hold the villain innocent?
 No more;—my path is evident and smooth;
 And I have not been idle here in Rome.
 Wealth lacks me not;—no matter how it came,
 I live in fair and easy affluence!
 Then of intrigues;—my suit with Lydia
 Strengthens apace; already have I found
 A secret access to the lady's chamber,
 Which, in the absence of her lord, I'll use;
 And force shall furnish all that love denies!
 Thus do I thrive!—But let me now to court,
 To see the trial of this honest knave,
 And my infernal rancour wreak on him!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Rome.—The Forum.—TELUCUS upon the Tribune's bench.

Enter PRIMUS.

Tel. This is no common deed;—a Citizen
 And Senator of Rome to be assailed
 At midnight, in the city's very heart,
 In his own halls deliberately stabbed!
 His coiffures rifled, and his gold purloined!
 The vengeance of the law is hot against
 Crimes of this dark and horrid character.

Prim. One of the murderers has been discovered,
And, verily, seems guilty of the deed;—
His vagrant, scowling aspect speaks as much.

Tel. The Roman law presumes him innocent;—
So shall the judge, until the case be heard.

Prim. All circumstances plead against the man;
And nice distinctions suit not times like these!
Examples must be made. 'Tis policy
To treat a dozen men as rogues rather
Than that one 'scape for lack of evidence,
And let misdeeds run riot through the realm;—
Example is the motto of the day!

Tel. Inglorious motto! If there be a doubt
The accused should surely reap the benefit.
Much better that a million rogues escape
Than that a single honest man should die.

Prim. Lo! where they come!

Tel. Then let us be prepared.

Prim. Thou mock'st the maxims of the good old times!

Tel. Talk not to me of times and precedents!
The prisoner shall have justice to the full;
So shall the State;—not an iota more.

Enter ALCANDER, guarded; ISOCLES; AND TWO WATCHMEN.

Let him stand forth! Thus art thou charged withal,
On three distinct and separate counts. The first,
That thou hast slain a Roman Senator;
The second, thou hast carried off his gold;
And lastly, thou hast killed a fellow-robber.

Alc. The gods bear witness to my innocence!

Justice and mercy never jar; they still
Unite with love, and rule the universe.
Offence has been committed—some dire crime
Against the gracious Majesty of Heaven.
The God who governs is a God of love;
’Tis mercy that meet punishment ensue—
To pardon were to be unmerciful!
Man, finite man, would scan the Infinite,
Assign Him attributes, and codes of law
To regulate His high unchanging will!
He fails to comprehend an abstract God;
And therefore clothes Him in a concrete form!
But finds his mind as much at fault as ever;—
Finite can never fathom Infinite!
The Deity is One; His essence One;
And perfect Oneness runs through all His acts;—
There is no warring in the mind Divine!
He cannot err; whate’er He does is right;
His every act is just and merciful—
Holy, wise, powerful, truthful as Himself!
1st Watch. We found this fellow lurking in the tombs.
2d Watch. This gold, these caskets, lay about his feet.
1st Watch. One of the gang was butchered in the fray,
The robbers having quarrelled among themselves.
2d Watch. The rest had ta’en to flight. This is the man;
He seemed as if to sleep when we approached.
Tel. Enough! Bring forth the other witnesses;—
All this is circumstantial evidence,
Too vague and dim to draw conclusion from;
’Tis possible that this might so befall,

And yet the prisoner wholly innocent.

[ISOCLES *steps forward*.]

This is a dark unseemly personage;

Pray Jove he speak not with a lying tongue!

[*Aside*.]

Prim. This man I know not, but he came to me
And swore that he could testify the truth.

Tel. Speak, sir;—know'st thou that man?

Isoc. Ay, as a thief
And murderer!

Tel. Dost bear him any malice?

Alc. Another plot! He knows me but too well.
The villain haunts me like a leprosy,
And almost seems the shadow of myself!

[*Aside*.]

Isoc. How could I cherish malice to a man
I knew not till I caught him in the act?
Returning home last night, I met a band
Of desperadoes;—he was one of them;—
And, as they hied along, I deemed them bent
On some device of mischief. I did follow,
Still watching as I went, till they arrived
Hard by the dwelling of the Senator.
I saw them hastily unlock the door
And enter in, and thought no more on't,
Until the story of the murder reached me;
And duty urged me to lift up my voice,
To bring the murderer to punishment.

Tel. The prisoner was one of them?

Isoc. I said he was.

Tel. This is a fair and open narrative.
Hast anything to answer for thyself.

Alc. Summon Septimius, thy brother Tribune,
Who knows my antecedents, and can tell
My life and character.

Tel. Why summon him?
Thy former life and character is naught
To me. It is this murder which I try;
Hast anything to say regarding it?

Alc. The Judge must duty do;—albeit I
Am innocent of any of these crimes,
Although appearances hold out against me.
Stranger in Rome, and left without a friend
Whose kindly roof might shelter from the night,
I was compelled to tarry in the tombs;—
Ah! little recks the world of my distress!
Surely misfortune cannot be a crime;
And yet it drove me to a haunt so wild!
The last who spoke, in evidence, well knows
His fiendish story is as false as hell;—
But I am wearied of this checkered world,
And disregard the life that still might run.
Afflicted, persecuted, robbed of all
That binds man to the earth,—I tire of it,
And anxiously look forward to its close.
Days without number, I of late have been
A waif upon the troubled sea of life,
That every blast did buffet to and fro.
In Rome I fondly hoped to find a friend—
Vain bliss! Corruption had assailed the bud,
And blasted all the fruit that promised fair;—
Rome shall release me from a load of woe!

Sept. Wherefore art thou thus?
Some one informed me of a murderer
That was condemned to suffer punishment;—
Could I divine Alcander was the man?

Tel. The executioner must do his work!

Sept. Tribune! my life attests his innocence.
I do implore thee, by our common bond,
That thou delay the sentence of the law
Till we investigate this mystery.

Alc. Need I protest my innocence again?
How often shall I chime my story o'er?
Misfortune drove me to the dismal tombs,
For want of warmer roof to shelter me;
And one, who ever proves mine enemy,
Seized on the base advantage of this fact,
To implicate me as a criminal;—
The gods themselves can vouch how false his tale!

Isoc. Let not the Tribune stop the punishment,
Or hearken to that oily tongue of his!

Tel. I yet do think the law must take its course,
The rather that he seems my colleague's friend;—
Let even-handed justice be supreme!
The Roman people well may challenge us
For bartering our rectitude for gold,
Were friendship to arrest or stay the law;—
The case is one in which no doubt exists!

Sept. The sole responsibility be mine!
Here do I pledge my oath, that if my friend
Should afterwards appear a guilty man,
Because I interfered and craved delay,

My life is bound to meet the forfeiture!

Isoc. I do not like such pitiful bravadoes;
The execution should not be delayed.

Tel. The people clamour loudly for his death!

Enter 1st Watchman with FURCUS.

1st Watch. Make way! make way! the criminal is found,—
The stolen property along with him!

Furc. I do acquit all others of the deed;—
Guilty myself alone and Isocles!

Alc. There stands the man—the perjured Isocles!
Now, miscreant! thou art caught in thine own snare.

Tel. Conduct him hither, lictors! to his trial;—
I did not like his countenance at first.

Isoc. A plot! It is a scheme to work my death!
I am as innocent of these foul crimes
As Jove himself. I, simply passing by,
Did see these fellows in the premises,
Who now attempt to quit themselves of guilt,
By making me a party to the deed.

Tel. Thou shalt have ample justice at command;—
No man shall suffer till he's found a knave.

Sept. Did not I tell thee he was innocent?
And so he now appears before the world!

Furc. Search Isocles; he carries that on him
That will unfold the share he had in this.

*[The Lictors search him, and discover a silver chain
of the Senator.]*

Tel. Need we a further evidence of guilt?
We'll have him to the highway, led in chains,
To suffer a prolonged and cruel death!

[ALCANDER AND SEPTIMIUS embrace each other.—

ISOCLES is led off in chains.

Alc. Sweet as the fragrance of the summer air,
The loving greetings of a long lost friend!

Sept. And living voice of one I hold so dear;—
Let me embrace thee in my heart of hearts!

Alc. How true it is, as poets oft have sung,
Night's darkest hour is just before the dawn!
Truth, like the gods, is still omnipotent;—
The mists of error may o'erhang the heavens
With rueful night, and all be dark and dead,—
The sun of truth dispels the dismal clouds,
And throws a radiant halo round the world!

Enter LYDIAS.

Lydias. Where's he that is Alcander?

Sept. This is he.

Alc. Familiar is thy visage to mine eye.

Lydias. I do beseech a private audience.

Alc. Thou look'st upon my friends; therefore, speak out!

Lydias. From Athens I am hither come, and bear
The greeting of the people's love to thee.
Thy former banishment they have recalled,
Restored to thee the rights of citizen,
With all the honours, treasures, and domains
That owned Alcander in the days of yore.
Democrates, upon a bed of death,
And ill at heart, divulged the foul device

Which he and Isocles—a fiendish knave—
Did force upon the public mind withal.
The people, in thy cause unanimous,
Forthwith decreed what I have now declared.

Alc. As the soft zephyr thaws the winter's ice,
So gracious words of friendship melt the heart—
The soul, o'er gladdened, weeps for very joy.
Thus fares it with benighted traveller,
When, after drear dark hours of rain and storm,
The day's orb rises bright in sky serene.

Sept. The men of Athens wear a noble soul,
And of good bearing; 'tis their constant aim
To travel in the paths of rectitude.
Though from conflicting elements, mayhap,
They often err, and for a time bedim
The brighter glories that encompass them,—
Let but the honest truth be manifest,
And she is worshipped, like great Jove himself!

Alc. Thou knowest them well, Septimius! and well
Hast thou portrayed the people's character.
Such are the constant fruits of liberty—
To better and ennoble humankind!
'Tis right to cherish them with jealousy,
Lest they be mildewed with the passing plague.
Think not, though liberty hath been abused
And made to serve the worst of purposes,
That the abuse doth stain her loveliness;
Then 'tis not freedom but licentiousness.
Freedom, the heaven-born child of faith and truth,
Delights to think and act with sovereign will,

Controlled by nothing save the law of love.
We cannot tarnish godlike liberty;—
She, like the sun, emerges from the cloud
That for a moment dimmed his radiant orb,
And shines as fair and glorious as before!
An hour ago, and nature's hemisphere
Was black with clouds, and showed a hurricane
Ready to burst on my devoted head.
No covert nigh to shelter from the storm;—
Relief was proffered in the very time
When death appeared to hold supremacy!
Thus virtue even here has its reward;
And Jove has proved there's none so destitute
Whom his all-potent will may not relieve
And reinstate in honour and renown.
Thou dost remember I had once a dream
That troubled me?

Sept. I recollect it well;

'Twas on that morn I first saw Lydia;
And often have I thought upon that dream.

Alc. Methinks almost to letter 'tis fulfilled,
And I am on the precipice again.

Sept. Come, let's away and visit Lydia,
And pour upon her sight a flood of bliss,—
It will be heaven to her to see her friend.

Alc. Oh! I have many things to tell you both;
And ye shall leave this overcrowded Rome
To live and reign in Athens with your friend;—
There liberty doth burn as bright as here,
And calls forth all the energies of man.

Sept. We shall be rivals in the ranks of glory;
And one in friendship's ever-during bond!

Enter LYDIA AND PHILANDRA.

Sept. Lo, where she comes! Philandra with her, too—
The lady who informed me of thy fate!

Alc. I joy to see thy Lydia look so well;—
Live and be happy with my dearest friend.
And thou, Philandra! what brought thee to Rome?

Phil. I hither came in hope of finding thee.

Alc. And thou hast found me. I was once thy slave;—
To me, in low estate, thy bosom glowed;—
Wilt thou enslave me now in bonds of love?
Thy blush says Ay. This is a wondrous day!
Great Jove himself is acting miracles!
We must have time to tell our incidents,
And talk of victories and laurels won! [Scene closes.]

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